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ABSTRACT

This comparative study examines learning networks from an historical perspective and, in addition to determining the state-of-the-art after seven years of independent development, provides operational definitions of the major critical elements needed to assure the development of a successful learning network model. Learning networks are discussed as a response to the problems of American education. To assess the state-of-the-art and to determine the chief characteristics that account for the high failure rate of the concept, seven major operational variables critical to successful learning network development are discussed: (1) general orientation reflected in legal status; (2) philosophy; (3) funding; (4) organization of information; (5) communication programs; (6) client access; and (7) management and administration. Data for these variables were collected through personal interviews with founders or chief administrators of 18 active and 10 inactive learning networks. Each was analyzed comparatively in terms of time in existence, number of participants on file, population of the service area, participation percentage, and clientele demographics. Analysis indicates that lack of funding is a central problem, and that further research is needed in the areas of network users and effects of program modifications. (CWM)

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NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEARNING NETWORKS IN THE UNITED STATES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Education Administration

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

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By

GEORGE ROBERT LEWIS

Evanston, Illinois

June 1978

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES vi

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 2

General Problems with American Education
Learning Networks as a Response to the Problem
Specific Problems in Establishing Learning Networks

II. HISTORY OF LEARNING NETWORKS 25

Precursors to Learning Networks
Development of Learning Networks in the U. S.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN 61

Description of Variables
Data Collection Procedure

IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA 82

General Information
Legal Status
Philosophy
Funding
Organization of Information
Communication Programs
Client Access
Management and Administration
Personal Impressions

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 127

BIBLIOGRAPHY 138

VITA 140

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
A.	Affiliation Status of Learning Networks	59
B.	Regional Locations of Learning Networks	59
C.	General Information	83
D.	Legal Status	87
E.	Philosophy (Motivation of Founders)	90
F.	Funding	93
G.	Organization of Information	100
H.	Communication Programs	105
I.	Client Access	109
J.	Management and Administration	113

INTRODUCTION

Learning networks are a relatively recent educational phenomona. The first learning networks began to appear in the early 1970's as a direct response to problems in American education that were defined by Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer. To date, at least fifty-two learning networks have been established in towns and cities across the United States. Unfortunately, a fairly high failure rate has characterized the development of this new approach to educational resource utilization--nearly two-thirds of the networks that were started are no longer in operation. Moreover, many of the learning networks now in operation are probably functioning substantially below their real capacity.

This comparative study, in addition to determining the state-of-the-art of learning networks after seven years of scattered evolutionary development, will attempt to identify, from an operational point of view, the major critical variables needed to assure the development of a successful model. Once these variables are so identified and the problems associated with them are discussed, it is hoped that administrators of operational programs and founders of future programs will be able to focus their time, energies, and limited resources on those operational areas which seem to be critically important for the survival of their programs.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

General Problems with American Education from the Viewpoints of Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer

In 1967, Ivan Illich, the founder of the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and Everett Reimer, the leader of CIDOC's annual seminars on "Alternatives in Education," began a systematic analysis of schooling in the United States: Although their conclusions were basically the same, each published a book concerning the problems of schooling and recommendations for alternative systems of teaching and learning. Illich's book, Deschooling Society, came out in 1970 and Reimer's, School Is Dead, was published in 1971. Below are four of the major conclusions that they reached as a result of examining the process of schooling:

1. Schooling is not an economically feasible way to achieve universal education;

2. Schooling encourages the development of competitive consumption and institutional dependence;

3. Compulsory attendance and prepackaged curricula tend to curtail rather than enhance the right to learn for many people; and

4. Certification through schooling tends to equate class attendance with competence and limits the number of available educational opportunities.

Cost of Schooling

Schools[1] represent one of many possible ways to organize and distribute educational resources. In the developed countries, schools are by far the most popular and widespread delivery system of formal education opportunities. In the developing and underdeveloped countries their establishment is frequently a goal to be achieved. Unfortunately, the developed countries, especially the United States, are demonstrating that schooling is a very expensive proposition--so expensive that it is quite unlikely that most countries of the world could ever afford to replicate the kinds of programs available in the United States. Yet, it is commonly believed that the educational programs provided by the developed countries are the only way to achieve universal education (i.e., equal educational opportunity).

Both Illich and Reimer maintain that to achieve equal educational opportunity through schooling is not feasible. Based on calculations made from school cost data in the annual reports of the U.S. Office of Education and supplemented by information contained in such special reports as the Coleman Study on equal opportunity, Reimer, in 1971, made the following assertion:

> The children of the poorest tenth of the United States population attend school for an average of less than five years. The schools they attend, at this grade level, spend no more than five hundred dollars per pupil per year. These children cost the public, in schooling, less than twenty-five hundred dollars each over a lifetime. The children of the richest tenth of the population finish college and a year of graduate school, which costs about thirty-five thousand dollars. Assuming that one

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[1]For the purpose of their analyses, Illich and Reimer define school as the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum.

> third of this is private expenditure, the richest tenth still get ten times as much of public funds for education as the poorest tenth.[2]

According to calculations made by Illich, the disproportions in Latin American countries are substantially greater than those made above by Reimer for the United States. Depending on the country, "the amount of public money spent on each graduate student is between 350 and 1,500 times the amount spent on the median citizen (that is, the citizen who holds the middle ground between the poorest and the richest)."[3]

Illich believes that the more money placed at the disposal of schools the less of an educational affect it has.

> In the United States the per capita costs of schooling have risen almost as fast as the cost of medical treatment. But increased treatment by both doctors and teachers has shown steadily declining results. Medical expenses concentrated on those above forty-five have doubled several times over a period of forty years with a resulting 3 percent increase in life expectancy in men. The increase in educational expenditures has produced even stranger results; otherwise President Nixon could not have been moved this spring to promise that every child shall soon have the "Right to Read" before leaving school.[4]

A recent article in Time adds credence to the above notion Illich presented back in 1970:

> To maintain the U.S.'s vast public education establishment, from elementary schools to colleges, taxpayers will spend $144 billion this year--a 152% increase over the past decade. Those billions add up to more than the country spends for national defense. But never have more Americans worried about whether

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[2]Everett Reimer, School Is Dead (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971), p.24.

[3]Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 12.

[4]Ibid., 11-12.

> they are getting their money's worth from the institutions that were once the symbol of the nation's dedication to democracy.[5]

In spite of these huge expenditures, which have been increasing considerably faster than the rate of inflation, the Time article indicates that there is reason for additional concern:

> . . . all signs indicate that today's students are more poorly equipped in basic skills than were their predecessors. After holding steady for decades, the average scores on the College Entrance Examination Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test, still the broadest standard of nationwide educational achievement, have been falling slowly but steadily since 1962.[6]

On the basis of his assessment and analysis of the schooling situation, Illich draws the following conclusion:

> The escalation of the schools is as destructive as the escalation of weapons but less visibly so. Everywhere in the world school costs have risen faster than enrollments and faster than the GNP; everywhere expenditures on school fall even further behind the expectations of parents, teachers, and pupils. Everywhere this situation discourages both the motivation and the financing for large-scale planning for nonschooled learning. The United States is proving to the world that no country can be rich enough to afford a school system that meets the demands this same system creates simply by existing, because a successful school system schools parents and pupils to the supreme value of a larger school system, the cost of which increases disproportionately as higher grades are in demand and become scarce.
>
> Rather than calling equal schooling temporarily unfeasible, we must recognize that it is, in principle, economically absurd, and that to attempt it is intellectually emasculating, socially polarizing, and destructive of the credibility of the political system which promotes it.[7]

Competitive Consumption

Illich and Reimer look upon schooling from a global perspective. They feel that what is done through schools and other modern institutions

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[5] "High Schools Under Fire," Time, November 14, 1977, p. 62.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 14.

in the developed countries in some way has either a direct or indirect effect on people's lives in most other countries. Schools, for example, have played a major role in preparing the American people for a life-style steeped in competitive consumption--first to meet and then surpass the consumptive standards of others. In many respects schooling represents an initiation rite into a consumer society. Success in school leads to acquisition of degrees and certificates, and then to higher paying jobs, to increased ability to purchase and consume more material items, to the need for more production of such items, to increased competition (nation-state) for limited resources, and then finally to the depletion of the resources and more pollution of the environment. While consuming and producing may not be inherently bad in and of themselves, when taken to an extreme, they can ultimately have a damaging, if not catastrophic, effect on the global community.

> As the world is now organized, the standard of living in India can rise consistently only if the standard of living in the United States also rises. Because of its effects on the demand for Indian exports and upon the supply of American capital abroad, stagnation of the American economy tends to depress the economic growth of India. Yet, a normal rise in the United States average income is twice the total income of the average Indian. Raising world consumption standards to U.S. levels would multiply the combustion of fossil fuels by fifty times, the use of iron a hundred times, the use of other metals over two hundred times. By the time these levels were reached, consumption levels in the United States would again have tripled and the population of the world would also have tripled. Such projections lead to results as absurd as the premises from which they start.[8]

Basically, Illich and Reimer believe that there can be no open-ended progress and still have a viable planet. There simply are not enough resources to go around. Yet this is what schooling and other

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[8]Reimer, School Is Dead, p. 11.

modern institutions promise. This is the promise of science and technology unrestrained by reason. This is the promise that has promoted the growth of schools. And, as a result, schools have played a major role in contributing to the "revolution of rising expectations."

Reimer asserts that school

> . . . has become the universal church of a technological society, incorporating and transmitting its ideology, shaping men's minds to accept this ideology, and conferring social status in proportion to its acceptance. There is no question of man's rejecting technology. The question is one of adaptation, direction, and control. There may not be much time, and the only hope would seem to lie in education--the true education of free men capable of mastering technology rather than being enslaved by it, or by others in its name.[9]

Illich contends that

> . . . a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption, on our engendering a life style which will enable us to be spontaneous, independent, yet related to each other, rather than maintaining a life style which only allows us to make and unmake, produce and consume--a style of life which is merely a way station on the road to the depletion and pollution of the environment.[10]

Just as schools provide the principal initiation rite into a consumer society they also provide the first major step toward institutional dependence. They induce the public to confuse process with substance. Through the schooling process, students are "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, class attendance with knowledge acquisition, and a diploma with competence.[11]

> By the time they go to school, children have learned how to use their bodies, how to use language, and how to control their

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[9] Ibid., 30.

[10] Illich, Deschooling Society, pp. 75-76.

[11] Ibid., 1.

> emotions. They have learned to depend upon themselves and have been rewarded for initiative in learning. In school these values are reversed. The what, when, where, and how of learning are decided by others, and children learn that it is good to depend upon others for their learning. They learn that what is worth while is what is taught and, conversely, that if something is important someone must teach it to them.[12]

Illich suggest that

> . . . once we have learned to need school, all our activities tend to take the shape of client relationships to other specialized institutions. Once the self-taught man or woman has been discredited, all nonprofessional activity is rendered suspect. In school we are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases with the amount of input; and, finally, that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates. . . . Once a man or woman has accepted the need for school, he or she is easy prey for other institutions. Once young people have allowed their imaginations to be formed by curricular instruction, they are conditioned to institutional planning of every sort. "Instruction" smothers the horizon of their imaginations.[13]

As a result of these considerations, Illich and Reimer believe that many of our outlooks have become too institutionalized; we have become too dependent on modern institutions and the professionals who run them; we believe that process inevitably produces something of value, for example,

> . . . medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavor are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies.[14]

The transfer of responsibility from "self" to institution as well as

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[12]Reimer, School Is Dead, p. 44.

[13]Illich, Deschooling Society, pp. 55-56.

[14]Ibid., 1.

the promotion of increased reliance on professional care guarantee an ongoing process of social regression. The more people rely on others to take care of their responsibilities, the less able they are to fend for themselves. Moreover, widespread institutional dependence is simply not possible from an economic standpoint. Just as there are not enough physical resources available to meet the perceived consumptive demands of the globe's population, so too there are not enough financial resources available to develop institutional mechanisms (maintained by professionals) that can satisfy the "service demands" of the globe's population.

Compulsory Attendance

Except for a few religious sects (e.g., Seventh Day Adventists) and a handful of educators and private citizens, compulsory school attendance has become accepted as a sensible and integral part of the American way of life. As such, its usefulness and economic value is rarely questioned. To many people, compulsory attendance seems to have many appealing features, for example: 1) it exposes youngsters to a sequential, pre-packaged, and generally accepted curriculum that they should master in order to become well-informed, responsible adults; 2) it furnishes youngsters with learning opportunities that their parents, either through lack of interest or ability, are unable to provide; 3) it enables parents to have a 6-8 hours per day respite from the responsibilities of child-rearing; 4) it affords children with the opportunity to meet and socialize with other children in their age range; 5) it keeps young people for an ever-increasing length of time off an ever-tightening job market; and 6) it creates a plethora of

service jobs for professional schoolteachers, administrators, truant officers, school psychologists, etc.

Illich and Reimer in their analysis of schooling, conclude that these features, while superficially attractive, are not necessarily positive and in some cases are overtly disadvantageous and counter-productive. In essence, they feel that the costs involved in maintaining a system of compulsory education are inordinately high both in terms of dollars spent and wasted human potential.

By confining young people to a classroom and compelling them to learn a series of curricular subjects in which they may have little or no interest set the stage for classroom disruption, behavioral problems, and vandalism. In such settings the role of the teacher is more aligned with wardens and security police than with educational guides or facilitators.

> Child care costs money, and although schools provide it relatively cheaply, this is where most of the school budget goes. Time studies conducted in Puerto Rico by Anthony Lauria show that less than 20% of a teacher's time is available for instructional activities. The rest is spent on behavior control and administrative routine. Lauria's data support a statement John Gardner once made, long before he was Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the federal government of the United States. He said that everything a high school graduate is taught in twelve years of schooling could easily be learned in two years, and with a little effort in one. Since child care is the most tangible service schools provide, and since parents are naturally concerned about the quality of such care, this function has a priority claim on school resources. Other functions must compete for what is left after prevailing local standards of safety, comfort, and convenience have been met.[15]

Illich agrees with Albert Einstein who once remarked that, "compulsory schooling is like compulsory spinach." Obligatory attendance,

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[15]Reimer, School Is Dead, pp. 34-35.

Illich feels, is bound to have some type of a negative effect on even the brightest of pupils.

> Healthy students often redouble their resistance to teaching as they find themselves more comprehensively manipulated. This resistance is due not to the authoritarian style of a public school or the seductive style of some free schools, but to the fundamental approach common to all schools--the idea that one person's judgment should determine what and when another person must learn.[16]

Illich goes on to say that

> If we do not challenge the assumption that valuable knowledge is a commodity which under certain circumstances may be forced into the consumer, society will be increasingly dominated by sinister pseudo schools and totalitarian managers of information. Pedagogical therapists will drug their pupils more in order to teach them better, and students will drug themselves more to gain relief from the pressures of teachers and the race for certificates.[17]

Both Illich and Reimer feel that the best time for people to learn is when they have a need to learn. One of the major weaknesses of the obligatory curriculum in this regard is that it frequently creates a mismatch between student's needs/desires and what they are required to learn. Perhaps it is this sort of mismatch that plays a significant role in the onset of motivational problems that many elementary school teachers witness, especially in the second and third grades. It seems that children customarily enter school with an obvious desire to learn and to make sense out of the world that surrounds them. But after having been in the school setting for a year or two, some children simply begin to lose interest and then need to be "motivated" to learn by means of secondary and artificial reinforcement. Unfortun-

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[16]Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 60.

[17]Ibid., 72.

ately, in the absence of environmentally produced rewards and punishments some children never regain the desire to learn and, as adults, they tend to go through life uninterested and uninvolved.

Another byproduct of the curricular or assembly line approach to education is widespread alienation among young people. Illich contends that

> Alienation, in the traditional scheme, was a direct consequence of work's becoming wage-labor which deprived man of the opportunity to create and be recreated. Now young people are prealienated by schools that isolate them while they pretend to be both producers and consumers of their own knowledge, which is conceived of as a commodity put on the market in school. School makes alienation preparatory to life, thus depriving education of reality and work of creativity. School prepares for the alienating institutionalization of life by teaching the need to be taught. Once this lesson is learned, people lose their incentive to grow in independence; they no longer find relatedness attractive, and close themselves off to the surprises which life offers when it is not predetermined by institutional definition. And school directly or indirectly employs a major portion of the population. School either keeps people for life or makes sure that they will fit into some institution.[18]

Reimer concludes that

> Schools treat people and knowledge the way a technological world treats everything: as if they could be processed. Anything can, of course, be processed, but only at a price, part of which involves ignoring certain aspects of the thing and certain by-products of the process. The price of processing people is intrinsically high. They tend to resist. What has to be left unprocessed may be the most important part of the person. Some of the by-products of educational processing are already evident. The greatest danger, however, lies in the prospect of success. A successfully processed humanity would lose the little control of its destiny that has always distinguished man from the rest of the world.[19]

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[18] Ibid., 67-68.

[19] Reimer, School Is Dead, p. 58.

Certification Limits Educational Opportunities

The United States Office of Education estimates that there are 3.2 million professional educators teaching in elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities in both the public and private sectors. Even though employed professional educators are the largest single professional group in the United States, they represent under 3% of the 150 million people who are of voting age. The other 97% of the adult population are not considered to be educators as the term is conventionally defined. Included within the "other 97%" are people who have the skills, talents, and knowledge that keep the United States functioning--the auto mechanics, housewives, engineers, secretaries, businessmen, artists, public servants, construction workers, nurses, craftsmen, etc. (many of whom have know-how that is totally unrepresented in institutional curricula).

Illich and Reimer assert that schools, because of their inherent structure, and professional educators, because of their vested employment interests, have monopolized education to the point where they not only limit the availability of learning opportunities to the general public but they also ignore the teaching potential of the "other 97%" of the adult population.

Unfortunately, the public has been indoctrinated to believe that unless a person sits in a teachers' college for four years, has a stamp of approval from a state certifying agency, and is employed by a formal educational institution, his or her ability to teach or to act as a skill or role model is not legitimate.

> What makes skills scarce on the present educational market is the institutional requirement that those who can demonstrate them may not do so unless they are given public trust, through a certificate. We insist that those who help others acquire a skill should also know how to diagnose learning difficulties and be able to motivate people to aspire to learn skills. In short, we demand that they be pedagogues. People who can demonstrate skills will be plentiful as soon as we learn to recognize them outside the teaching profession.[20]

Illich uses the following anecdote to substantiate his belief that there is much untapped teaching potential outside the realm of the educational profession:

> In 1956 there arose a need to teach Spanish quickly to several hundred teachers, social workers, and ministers from the New York Archdiocese so that they could communicate with Puerto Ricans. My friend Gerry Morris announced over a Spanish radio station that he needed native speakers from Harlem. Next day some two hundred teen-agers lined up in front of his office, and he selected four dozen of them--many of them school dropouts. He trained them in the use of the U.S. Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Spanish manual, designed for use by linguists with graduate training, and within a week his teachers were on their own--each in charge of four New Yorkers who wanted to speak the language. Within six months the mission was accomplished. Cardinal Spellman could claim that he had 127 parishes in which at least three staff members could communicate in Spanish. No school program could have matched these results.[21]

Finally, both Illich and Reimer believe that in order to have a humane educational system that is economically viable and makes sensible use of all educational resources (i.e. people who "know things"), the present evolutionary drift of American education must be radically altered.

> Universal education through schooling is not feasible. It would be more feasible if it were attempted by means of alternative institutions built on the style of present schools. Neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the proliferation of

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[20] Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 127.

[21] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

> educational hardware or software (in classroom or bedroom), nor finally the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility until it engulfs his pupils' lifetimes will deliver universal education. The current search for new educational funnels must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing and caring.[22]

Learning Networks are a Response to the General Problems of American Education

During the 1960's and especially in the 1970's several types of educational programs were developed in response to some of the issues raised by Illich, Reimer, and other critics of the schools, e.g., free schools, free universities, apprenticeships through a "university without walls," earning degrees by compentency-based examinations, human potential growth centers, as well as learning networks. The focus of this paper will be on one particular response--the development of learning networks in the United States.

As used in this study, a learning network is defined as a group of people who list their educational/recreational needs and offerings with a community referral agency for the purpose of finding other people in the group with whom they can teach, learn, or share similar or complimentary interests. Learning networks have four major characteristics that distinguish them from most traditional educational programs: 1) the curriculum is designed and controlled by participants--learners define the subjects they want to learn and teachers define the subjects they are willing to teach; 2) teachers are not required to have formal teaching credentials or college degrees in order to teach; 3) learners do not

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[22] Ibid., 4.

receive credits, diplomas, certificates, or degrees from the network for skills or knowledge acquired through the network; and 4) participation in a learning network is non-compulsory.

Fifty-two learning networks have been established in the United States during the past seven years. The most advanced learning network is The Learning Exchange in Evanston, Illinois. After six and one-half years of development The Learning Exchange has approximately 30,000 people registered in the program. The current Learning Exchange catalog lists more than 3,000 subjects that network participants have registered to teach, learn, discuss, or share with others. A paid staff of five full-time and fifteen part-time people are employed by The Learning Exchange to develop and maintain the listing and referral function of the network.

How a Learning Network Operates

In order for Chicago area residents to become part of the learning network, they telephone The Learning Exchange and indicate their specific educational and recreational needs and/or talents. This information is recorded, categorized, and stored in The Learning Exchange information bank. The telephone resource counselors at The Learning Exchange then use this information to refer teachers to learners and learners to teachers. People with similar interests are referred to each other. After referral, participants assume the responsibility of creating their own educational and recreational arrangements according to their own needs, abilities, and convenience. They determine when and where to meet, length of meeting, materials to be used, and whether or not there will be a fee.

Since The Learning Exchange does not provide meeting space for participants, approximately 90% of the sessions are held in the homes and apartments of participants. Libraries, community centers, parks, churches, business offices, and restaurants have also been used as meeting places.

Network participants tend to prefer individualized instruction. More than 90% of the learning arrangements they develop are on a one-to-one basis. Some teachers, however, specify that they will not start a class unless they have a set minimum of people willing to participate (usually between three and five).

Presently, more than 5,000 people are listed as teachers through The Learning Exchange. They come from virtually every walk of life and most of them do not have formal teaching credentials. The Learning Exchange was established on the assumption that a teaching certificate does not necessarily assure teaching competence, and that the lack of a teaching certificate does not necessarily have to be equated with teaching incompetence.

All teachers in the network are independent agents. They are not paid by The Learning Exchange for their services. Teachers may charge learners a fee or they may teach free of charge. Approximately 70% of the network teachers charge for their services, often on a sliding scale based on ability to pay. The hourly rate generally ranges from $.50 to $10.00 an hour depending on the subject, teacher, and number of people in the group. The other 30% either provide their services at no charge or develop some sort of mutually agreeable exchange arrangement, e.g., "You teach me Spanish and I'll show you how

to play the guitar," or "You teach me calculus and I'll do your typing." The Learning Exchange receives no commissions from teachers who choose to charge fees.

The Learning Exchange is primarily supported by a voluntary membership program patterned after the solicitation approaches employed by most PBS television stations. People are invited to become part of the network simply by filling out and returning a short registration form that serves only to verify their names and addresses as a modest security measure for the protection of the organization and its users. There is no registration fee. However, participants are encouraged to support the program through a voluntary membership program. There are two levels of membership--a Regular Membership at $15 per year and a Limited-Income Membership at $7.50 per year. Network participants who become supporting members receive a few extra benefits along with the basic listing and referral services which are free to everyone who returns the registration form. The self-support activities of The Learning Exchange usually cover approximately two-thirds of the program's operating budget. Corporate contributions and foundation grants make up the difference.

How Learners Benefit from a Learning Network

In many respects, a learning network is more of a process than it is a physical entity. As such, network participants have devised a variety of ways to use the process to further their self-directed learning and teaching activities. Below are some of the major usage patterns that have been evolving:

Participants are using the network to find tutors and teachers in more than 70 foreign languages, 125 types of arts and crafts, 50 musical instruments, plus a wide range of academic subjects, manual repair skills, and other kinds of educational and recreational activities.

Individuals who want to experience the rewards of sharing their skills and knowledge with others, earn extra income, meet other people, and play an active role in increasing the number of learning options for their community are offering to teach their neighbors through the network.

Handicapped people and senior citizens who have a difficult time attending formal classes offered by local educational institutions are finding individual teachers willing to visit their houses, apartments, or nursing homes.

Persons who are preparing for examinations like GED or CLEP are locating tutors to assist them in the subject areas they find particularly troublesome.

Parents are also locating tutors for their children who might be having difficulty in school with a particular course or who want to learn a subject that is not part of their schools' regular curricula.

Retired schoolteachers who want to keep their hand in education for a few hours per week are offering to tutor interested learners in subjects they previously taught in school.

High school and college students are locating experts in business, industry, government, and social agencies who are willing to provide personal knowledge and direction--thus expanding independent study opportunities and supplementing printed resource materials when students are writing research papers.

People who need fast answers to isolated questions are using the learning network as a "telephone encyclopedia" by getting the names of resource people registered in the appropriate subject area and calling them on the phone for their advice, input, and answers to questions.

Librarians, recreation department personnel, and program coordinators for community colleges are finding resource people from the network to expand their programs and course offerings and they are also publicizing their classes, workshops, and activities through the network to inform more people about their educational and recreational programs.

Program chairpersons of church, civic, and service organizations are finding guest speakers and discussion group leaders for their

periodic meetings.

Schoolteachers are locating resource people from the community who are willing to visit their classrooms to share a skill, talent, or body of knowledge with students.

People are forming peer-match learning groups, i.e., they are initiating discussion groups around a particular book, author, magazine, philosophical viewpoint, etc. (Peer-match learning activities do not customarily have a teacher and a group of learners per se--participants usually have some background in the subject and they want to learn more by interacting with others who are also somewhat knowledgeable in the subject.)

Students of foreign languages are forming language practice groups in order to maintain or improve their fluency level. (As an alternative to the language groups, some people simply telephone other network participants on a weekly basis and conduct their conversations in the language they want to practice.)

Musicians are locating other people in the network who want to organize chamber music, country, jazz, rock, and choral groups in order to practice and perform together.

People who want to trade books, plant cuttings, cassette tapes, recipes, phonograph records, children's clothes, professional services, etc. are initiating various types of "exchange groups."

Teen-agers, young adults, and people contemplating a career change are developing a no-cost, practical form of vocational counseling--they use the network to find individuals actively employed in their field(s) of interest and then discuss with them the pros and cons of the field, strategies for entry, educational requirements, etc.

Young people who are seeking apprenticeship opportunities are locating neighborhood newspaper editors, tailors, and other small businessmen through the network in order to create mutually beneficial training/working arrangements.

Individuals who do not know how to read or write are locating people in the network willing to help them improve their literacy skills on an "each one/teach one" basis.

Backpack campers and other travelers (domestic and foreign) are consulting with other network participants who have already visited their destination(s); and, as a result, they are better prepared to cope with such things as currency exchange problems, sites to visit, sites to avoid, etc.

Concerned citizens are locating people through the network who want to discuss and act on an issue affecting their neighborhood, e.g.,

school board decisions, women's rights, property taxes, nuclear energy, etc.

Network participants who have photographic darkrooms, carpentry workshops, and basement recording studios are permitting some other people to make use of their space and equipment.

Clergymen whose churches or synagogues have unused space are offering to provide meeting places for network participants who find it inconvenient or unsuitable to conduct their classes or discussion groups at home.

Since The Learning Exchange is an open-ended process it is anticipated that additional usage patterns will probably evolve during the coming years. It seems that the process is limited only by the needs, offerings, and creativity of the people who participate in the network.

Specific Problems in Establishing Successful Learning Networks

While The Learning Exchange has achieved a substantial degree of success with the network model in the Chicago area, similar programs in other parts of the country have not done as well. Of fifty-two learning networks that have been established in the United States, thirty-four are no longer in operation. Moreover, many of those that still exist are functioning well below their real potential.

The high failure rate of learning networks as well as the low level of functioning of operational programs are probably the result of many factors. It is expected that these factors fall into two general categories: 1) a set of factors that indicate there is something inherently wrong with the learning network concept as presented to the public at this particular stage of American history (i.e., it is an idea whose time has not come); and 2) a set of factors that indicate the

learning network concept is and has been ineffectively implemented by the founders of many programs.

In regard to the first set of factors, many people may not use a network because they do not value learning unless they are rewarded with credits, diplomas, degrees, or certificates. Many people may not want to be bothered with creating their own learning situations in respect to choosing teachers, deciding when and where to meet, and negotiating fees with teachers if they charge for their services. Many people may simply prefer to either learn on their own or take a course through an established educational institution. Many people may want to learn only from fully-credentialled, certified teachers. Many people, in spite of their demonstrated skills and knowledge, may not be capable of teaching others. Many people who are shy, insecure, or lack the necessary verbal skills may be intimidated by the central role the telephone plays in terms of finding teachers through the network office and also in terms of contacting the teachers to make the necessary meeting arrangements. Many people may fear that they will be rejected. Many people may have reservations about inviting "strangers" into their homes, expecially if they come from different racial, cultural, socioeconomic, or educational backgrounds. Many people may be uneasy about visiting a "stranger's" home. Many people may fear that they will be matched with someone who has evil intentions--rape, burglery, etc. Basically, it may be that the learning network concept is too open-ended, too unstructured, too anarchistic, and places too many demands on participants in regard to the responsibilities they must assume on their own.

In regard to the second set of factors, the founders of the respective programs may not have raised enough funds to develop their programs adequately. They may not have employed suitable publicity campaigns to acquaint people with the network concept. They may not have devised the kinds of information systems needed to provide quality listing and referral services. They may not have utilized appropriate kinds of management systems with network staff to serve network participants. And finally they may not have had the caliber of staff that could transform the "idea" of a learning network into a reality.

While it should be recognized that both sets of factors probably contribute to the high failure rate and low level of functioning of learning networks, for the purpose of this study, this writer will focus on those factors which deal directly with the implementation of the concept. The experience of the Evanston-based program, in spite of the real or perceived shortcomings of the concept, seems to indicate that learning networks are needed, many people have the ability to use the program as it is presently structured, and the success of the model is indeed possible.

As a result of these considerations this comparative study will examine both the active and inactive models in order to: 1) identify the major administrative and operational problem areas associated with the development of learning networks; 2) assess the manner in which the existing models have solved or are solving these problems; 3) assess the manner in which the inactive models attempted to solve their problems; and 4) establish a pool of knowledge from which administrators and prospective administrators of such programs can draw

in order to enhance their chances of developing successful programs for their communities.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF LEARNING NETWORKS

Precursors to Learning Networks

According to Denis Detzel, formerly a Northwestern University graduate student who helped Illich and Reimer organize CIDOC's "Alternatives in Education" seminars, the learning network concept emerged from these sessions not so much as a result of considerations of historical antecedents but rather from a critical analysis of the problems inherent in schooling. Further, Mr. Detzel comments that the development of the learning network concept, of necessity, had to stem from an ahistorical perspective. In proposing that alternatives to schooling be established, Illich and Reimer were, in a true sense, encouraging the development of a new set of cultural parameters (challenging the notions of unlimited growth, competitive consumption, compulsory attendance, etc.). Since schooling has been one of the mainstays of the existing culture, the seminar participants at CIDOC purposefully avoided the search for historical antecedents and instead focused on ways to establish alternative cultural and institutional patterns which were quite unlike those characterizing most of those patterns found in comtemporary society.

Even though CIDOC participants gave little, if any, attention to historical antecedents, a survey of the literature reveals that

there were indeed quite a few precursors to the learning network model in the United States. In the following pages these precursors will be divided into four categories: informal networks, independent educational movements, institutionally-affiliated educational programs, and listing and referral services. Each will be described, for the most part, in terms of their rationale, scope of operation, population served, time in existence, location, and present status.

Informal Networks

Since the dawn of humanity, men and women, either intentionally or unintentionally, devised informal learning networks. They developed ways to learn from one another without compulsion, certification, and accreditation. In the tribal days most, if not all, learning occurred in this fashion. A boy or girl learned how to plant and cultivate seeds by listening, watching, and assisting the elders. In American Colonial days, "reading was often taught on an each-one-teach-one basis by parents or other elders, or by siblings or peers."[1] This teaching occurred in no special place or by any special person. It occurred wherever people could gather and was taught by anyone who knew how to read.

Blacksmithing, silversmithing, clockmaking, and other specific trades were almost always learned through apprenticeship in the early days of America. An apprenticeship was a mutual arrangement, in which,

> . . . an apprentice signs a contract under the consent of his father with the tradesman. In it are stated the terms for both

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[1]Lawrence Cremin, American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 128.

> sides. The apprentice must serve his master, keep his secrets and live a puritan life during his free hours. The tradesman must give the apprentice room and board, cover any medical expenses and must teach him the trade, give him two suits of clothes and instruct him in an appropriate level of reading and writing.[2]

Usually apprentices ranged in age from eleven to nineteen years and they were not in a social class that would aspire to higher education. Apprenticeships still exist in various trades, but most trades today are learned in vocational schools. For this reason the apprenticeship no longer represents a dominant form of learning in the United States.

An informal network that played an important role in the founding of the United States was the New England Town Meeting. According to Malcolm Knowles,

> . . . it served as a training ground in the art of self-government for the colonists. Possibly it also provided a general formula on which later adult educational programs were based, such as public forums.[3]

Actually what occurred in town meetings--discussion and interchange of ideas for the purpose of improving community interaction between men--still occurs in community organizational meetings, public forums, and a myriad of other informal gatherings concerning various topics.

Even today informal networks exist. One example is the corporate network: a network of national and international corporate leaders and their university connections who consult one another during their daily operations. Denis Detzel, presently serving as Director of Affirmative Action and Manager of Corporate Responsibility for McDonald's

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[2]James Axtell, The American People in Colonial New England (West Haven, Connecticut: Pendulum Press, 1973), p. 86.

[3]Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Education Movement in the United States (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1962), p. 9.

Corporation, comments that

> . . . the written word is the slowest and most outdated form of communication there is. Do you think that when I need information on a topic, I spend five weeks doing research in a library? Of course not, I call a recognized expert in the appropriate department at a university or an organization or whatever and he gives me the most up-to-date info on the topic in a matter of minutes.[4]

Other informal networks include independent seminars, encounter groups, communes, weekend retreats, or any gathering where free discussion occurs. It is surely evident that as long as humankind exists, so too, will informal networks of learning.

Independent Educational Movements

Many times an informal learning network evolved into an educational movement. One of the first was begun by Benjamin Franklin. In 1730 he formed a club in Philadelphia for mutual improvement called the Junto. Franklin describes it as follows:

> We met on Friday evenings. The rules I drew up required that every member in his turn should produce one or more queries on any point of morals, politics, or natural philosophy, to be discussed by the company, and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direction of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute or desire of victory; and to prevent warmth, all expressions of positiveness in opinion or of direct contradiction were after time made contraband and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties.[5]

Many significant political and philosophical ideas evolved from this weekly gathering of Franklin and his cronies. Although its membership

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[4]Denis Detzel, private conversation, Chicago, Illinois., November, 1977.

[5]L. Jesse Lemisch, ed., Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings (New York: The New American Library, 1961), p. 72.

was limited to twelve, its influence affected virtually everyone in the colonies. It was in this group that the concepts of the subscription library, taxation proportioned to property, and the Union fire station were first discussed and then later planned and implemented. The Junto still exists in Philadelphia and so does one of its offspring--the American Philosophical Society. The society has a regular publication that still discusses important philosophical ideas of today.

A century after the Junto was born, Josiah Holbrook unknowingly developed the idea behind the Junto one step further. Whereas the Junto was an elite, closed study group, Holbrook developed a plan to not only open the study group up to others, but he also initiated the organization of a national network of study groups. In 1826, after Holbrook explained his plan to a group he was lecturing in Millbury, Massachusetts, they proceeded to organize themselves into the first branch of the American Lyceum. According to Malcolm Knowles:

> Lyceums are associations formed for the mutual improvement of their members and the common benefit of society. Their members meet on frank, cordial, and equal grounds. All declare, by joining the lyceum, that they wish to extend their knowledge; and from the manner in which they associate each may become, by turns, a learner and a teacher. All unnecessary formalities, as well as expenses, are to be avoided, that the way of learning may be rendered as free as possible. . . . These associations may be formed in almost any village or neighborhood by a few friends of knowledge; and by meeting with an audience once a week through the winter delivering lectures in a familiar manner, exhibiting and conversing of minerals, plants, etc., inviting inquiries.[6]

By 1836, there were 3,000 town lyceums, 100 county lyceums and 16 state lyceums. These lyceums were composed primarily of mechanics and farm people and in time served largely the middle classes. The

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[6]Knowles, Adult Education, p. 17.

lyceums did little to help the destitute and culturally disadvantaged. The lyceums continued to expand until the Civil War at which time they virtually disappeared. After the war, the name was used by talent bureaus who revived the lyceum to make money. These lyceums bore little resemblance to the lyceums of the early and middle 1800's.

Although the movement itself lasted only four decades, according to Knowles it had a profound effect on American society:

> The lyceum movement was significant in many respects. . . . It was one of the most powerful instruments of its time for the mobilization of public schools. In fact, its very success in this mission presaged its own decline. Moreover, it produced a general intellectual stimulation throughout the country by providing a mechanism for local citizens to study together and by exposing them to the ideas and personalities of such notable giants of American thought as Wendell Phillips, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, Henry David Thoreau. . . . It spawned the idea of an integrated national system of local groups organized primarily for adult educational purposes.[7]

Although the lyceum movement died, the tradition of study groups and lectures continued to thrive. In fact, not too long after its decline, a similar movement, the Chautauqua, was born.

In 1873, Dr. John Heyl Vincent, a methodist minister from Galena, Illinois, and Lewis Miller, an Akron mill owner, inventor, and philanthropist, founded the original Chautauqua. Situated on the shore of Lake Chautauqua in western New York, it was intended primarily as a summer school, open for a couple of weeks only, for the advanced training of Sunday school teachers.

In addition to the planned program for Sunday school teachers, there were general lectures and entertainment. As time passed, the

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[7] Ibid., 18.

lectures became popular and tended to reflect the issues of the day. By 1876, the Chautauqua Summer Program, now lengthened to 24 days, included a Scientific Conference where modern principles of science were not only discussed but also demonstrated, a Temperance Conference in which speakers would denounce liquor, and a Church Conference in which there were lectures about the leading theological issues of the day.

In 1878, the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) was founded, and according to Arthur E. Bestor its purpose was:

> . . . to secure to men and women deprived of educational opportunities the college student's general outlook upon the world and life. . . to be promoted by individual study in lines and textbooks which shall be indicated, by local circles for mutual help and encouragement in such studies, by a summer course of lectures and "students" sessions at Chautauqua, and by written reports and examinations.[8]

It became a four-year course of directed home reading leading to a diploma and graduation, in which, according to Bestor:

> All students read the same books at the same time, and any four consecutive years of reading were accepted as a complete course. Each annual group of readings was organized around a general subject and these subjects were repeated in a four year cycle. . . . A typical sequence would comprise an English, an American, a Continental, and a Classical year.[9]

Local circles of the CLSC appeared in small towns and villages across the nation. Home readers in these villages met to discuss textbooks or read papers on related topics. A. E. Bestor summarizes a demographic study of them:

> According to statistics given by John S. Noffsinger, 10,000 local circles were formed in the first 20 years of the CLSC; and 25% of these were in villages of less than 500 population and

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[8]Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr., Chautauqua Publications: An Historical and Bibliographical Guide (Chautauqua, New York: Chautauqua Press, 1934), p. 10.

[9]Ibid., 11.

50% in communities of between 500 and 3,500 population.[10]

The CLSC was composed of students from many different walks of life including servants, housewives, Mississippi riverboat captains, professionals, artists, railroad men, and even prisoners. These people met in libraries, their own homes, YMCA's, churches, and schools. According to Morrison:

> Its cumulative total by 1940, as reported by Chautauqua President Arthur E. Bestor to the New York commission of education, had reached a membership of three quarters of a million of whom 10 per cent had graduated. Members and circles spanned not only the United States, but the continents and subcontinents from Labrador to Argentina, from Puerto Rico to Ceylon, from Russia to Korea. . .[11]

Today, the CLSC is still a part of Chautauqua. The number of participants has declined from thousands to hundreds due to competition from radio, libraries, book of the month clubs, and other newer avenues of learning. Today it is kept afloat by its lectures and discussions at Chautauqua during the summer months.

While the CLSC developed, so did other aspects of Chautauqua. In the early 1880's, the Chautauqua University was born with its School of Theology and School of Languages offering advanced work by correspondence. Both of these schools had the authority to confer degrees. In the 1890's, a university extension was added offering a list of over 150 lecturers to carry on courses in interested communities.

But, as universities and other institutions better equipped for year round work appeared, Chautauqua lost its foothold in formal higher

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[10] Ibid., 12.

[11] Theodore Morrison, Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion and the Arts in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 69.

education and relinquished its degree-related programs to the developing universities. Chautauqua retained its programs of outdoor recreations, lectures, and music as adjuncts to its summer program.

Another aspect of Chautauqua that developed was the independent Chautauquas. The Chautauqua in New York was so successful that shortly after it began, it was imitated by other communities. These imitations took two forms: the independent or permanent Chautauquas and the circuit or tent Chautauquas. The latter carried organized lecture and entertainment programs by rail and other forms of intercity transportation to various communities. The permanent Chautauquas occurred annually at the same site and resembled the Chautauqua in New York.

Although neither of these types was formally connected with the original Chautauqua, they often received assistance and guidance from the mother institution if they worked in the spirit and design initiated by Vincent and Miller. This support came in the form of moral and practical support, leadership, and the sharing of resources for programs. The circuit Chautauquas continued to exist for over forty years. By 1910, they were so numerous that all of North America was divided into Chautauqua territories, and according to Theodore Morrison, "New England and the Eastern Seaboard, the mid-continent, the South and the Southwest, the Pacific Coast, and rural Canada were all penetrated by the brown tents."[12] Morrison also quoted 1924 statistics about the number of persons attending these Chautauquas: "Bruce Bliven in the New Republican 1924, at about the peak of the circuit

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[12] Ibid., 180.

movement, reported that 'last year more than 10,000,000 people bought in excess of 35,000,000 tickets to individual Chautauqua performances.'"[13]

But the circuits were not to last. As the United States moved from a rural to an urban society, the people began to entertain themselves through the city theaters, concerts, and libraries. And as radio developed, people could turn the knob and receive broadcasts of their famous speakers, music, and theater without ever leaving their living room. With these and other changes, the circuit Chautauquas no longer were needed and like the lyceums before them, they disappeared into the pages of history.

Today only the original Chautauqua exists. Several tjmes it came dangerously close to dying as an institution, but each time on the verge of death, it was revived. Even the radio, television, and "sights" of the city have been unable to replace the sense of community and tradition the Chautauqua in New York offers. Thus, the summer program continues with its plays, concerts, and lectures; its summer schools and their regular lectures; and the CLSC with its four-year course of directed home learning. People largely from the middle classes still attend for a fun and exciting educational experience at a summer resort-like atmosphere.

Thus far the movements described--the Junto, Lyceum, and Chatauqua--have served the needs of the middle classes. But there were some that focused upon the needs of the poor and downtrodden. The Highlander Folk School was one of these and it concerned itself

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[13] Ibid., 181.

with the poor people in the Appalachian hills.

In 1932, Myles Horton, a University of Chicago graduate student, returned from his study of the Danish Folk Schools to implement an educational idea that had been brewing in his head for over four years. He and Don West, a young Congregationalist minister who had also studied the Folk Schools in Denmark were given a building and forty acres by Dr. Lillian Johnson, a former suffragette and long-term social activist who was getting ready to retire and wanted to turn over her property in Monteagle, Tennessee, to someone for a good cause. The cause that qualified was linking democracy with the needs of poor people of the South. The building became Highlander Folk School--a catalyst for social change in the South and eventually the nation.

One of the first things Myles learned was that in order to teach the mountain folk in Tennessee he had to unlearn all of the theories he had learned in school. He had to "learn from the people; (and) start their education where they are."[14] In order to assist them in social change towards democracy, he had to live with them and listen to their needs. As he did this the people began to organize programs, picket lines, and other tools to change the conditions of their lives.

Some of the programs that evolved included: 1) a six-week residential program that was for union members who showed potential of becoming organizers; 2) an extensive program in which students learned picketing techniques, labor songs, operation of mimeograph machines, and methods of dealing with social conflict by actually experiencing

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[14]Frank Adams, Unearthing Seeds of Fire: The Idea of Highlander (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: John F. Blair, 1975), p. 206.

them first-hand through union organizing drives; 3) an outdoor stage where young and old learned the significance of drama as a tool for social change; and 4) a literary program to enable the people of the Sea Islands of South Carolina to register to vote. These are just a few of the programs that were created from the needs of the people near Highlander.

After many programs for unions, Negro rights, and poor southern peoples' rights, the school has moved to a hillside farm overlooking the Smoky Mountains. Myles is no longer the president. He has been replaced by Mike Clark. This was the first step towards the continuation of the Highlander idea since Myles left. Thus, it appears that Highlander will continue to serve the poor adult southerner for some time to come.

While each met with varying degrees of success, it is apparent that the Junto, Lyceum, Chautauqua and Highlander Folk School all began as local informal structures to accommodate each of their respective communities' educational and/or social needs. But, soon after their inception, they evolved into movements encompassing educational needs in the nation. The Junto spawned other institutions--the library, fire static , etc.; the Lyceum became a major support for the establishment of United States compulsory education; Chautauqua, via its lecture program and its influential speakers, stimulated free discussion of major contemporary issues among people in previously closed off rural towns and villages; and Highlander served as a breeding ground for other social movements--civil rights, union organizaing, etc.

Today, there are still local informal networks developing into

educational movements. One example is the free university which formed out of the dissatisfaction that Berkeley college students had with the university they were attending. Instead of complaining, they set up their own classes minus the institutional formalities--grades, credentials, certificates, diplomas--to meet their needs. Since then, people have implemented free universities all across the nation and they are one of the major adult educational movements of today. It appears once again, that as long as there are informal networks, there will also be independent educational movements.

Institutionally Affiliated Programs

Up until now, the historical antecedents described in this chapter have been independent of institutions. They all began as an idea and soon turned into an institution. But not all of the historical antecedents to learning networks were separate from other structures. In fact, a number of them developed within or under the auspices of other institutions. Riverside and Evanston Churches both developed educational and recreational programs to enrich their community. The Denver Board of Education developed a voluntary school to meet the needs of residents who were not being served by their regular programs. San Bernardino Valley College and other universities served as sponsors for community-oriented educational projects using major media and other techniques to enhance adult education. Even the Tennessee Valley Authority had among its bureaucratic wrappings an informal educational structure. The following pages will describe these precursors in more detail.

Since the beginning of the United States, churches have been active forces in adult education. In colonial days the churches were major determinants of people's lives, morally and educationally. Colonists gathered at the church for worship and discussion of community issues. Reading and writing were often tutored informally at the church. But as America matured, schools and commerce became the central institutions and churches lost much of their influence. Consequently, churches developed other means to enrich their community spiritually. Frequently, churches devised non-traditional programs to serve this purpose and often these innovative arrangements developed into a successful adult education facility. Such was the case with the Riverside Church in New York and the Evanston Church in Illinois during the 1930's.

In 1841, the Norfolk Street Baptist Church was founded in New York City. From then until the 1930's, the church moved four times, changed its name to The Riverside Church, and in the process erased denominational lines and developed an educational and recreational program open to persons from all faiths and beliefs.

This program consisted of three parental guidance classes: one about infants, another about adolescents, and a third about teenagers. There was also a study of dramatics, a morning lecture-discussion group on issues in international relations, a reader's group for men in which men discussed books on major political, economic, and social problems, an arts and crafts department, and weekend visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Upon the inception of this educational program, The Riverside Church, according to Mary L. Ely, made the following statement concerning

its purpose:

> The church has a perception of the need for a fuller, richer development of the minds and personalities of people subject to the stultifying influences of the machine age. . . . Second, it is deeply conscious of the needs of the lonely. Finally, . . . a progressive church such as Riverside believes that somehow Christianity must find ways of making itself felt as a more vital influence.[15]

In 1932, the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Evanston began a program to promote fellowship. In the process, the Evanston Church Night, the name it became known by, unintentionally developed into a successful venture in adult education. By 1934, more than seven hundred persons were meeting in groups around topics such as sketching, new books, business, ethics, religion, folk dancing, and missions. The sessions were free, the faculty composed of professionals, and the atmosphere was informal.[16]

Today, churches continue to be involved in adult education. Some churches' activities are so large that they require an adult educational director. According to Josephine Rudd and Olive Hall:

> Adult education is carried out through classes in the church school, informal discussion groups, short-term study groups, drama groups, and retreats or special weekends.[17]

The fact that some church groups are playing a leadership role in establishing learning networks (see Chapter IV) shows that adult education is still developing within religious institutions.

The Denver Opportunity School in Colorado represents another

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[15]Mary L. Ely, Adult Education in Action (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1936), p. 151.

[16]Ibid., 153.

[17]Josephine Bartow Rudd and Olive Hall, Adult Education for Home and Family Life (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), p. 80.

manner in which an institutionally-affiliated education program originated. In this instance, a schoolteacher, Emily Griffith, noticed that the people who were in most need of adult education were being prevented from becoming involved in existing programs because of the rigid format of the Denver School System. She communicated her observation to the Denver Board of Education and in 1916 she convinced the Board to:

> . . . create a free public adult school where or through which anyone can learn anything that he needs to know whenever he needs to learn it and at whatever time of the day or night it is convenient for him to study.[18]

Griffith decided to go straight to the people and ask them about their educational needs.

> She was given the use of an old school building and was told to go ahead. Observing the sound principle that adult education springs from the soil of human needs, Miss Griffith invited people to register their wants and desires. They came in great numbers to talk things over with her.[19]

For teachers, she asked non-certified people from the community as well as certified teachers to come in to teach the subjects the students requested. Not only was there no certification and accreditation involved, most students were there purely for the sake of learning a skill to improve their lives. In determining the needs of the community, she also queried representatives of the business community and, by doing this, the Denver Opportunity School became the connecting link between businesses that needed trained workers and people who needed new skills in order to secure employment. Through this business-community

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[18]Elinor Bluemel, Opportunity School and Emily Griffith, Its Founder, (Denver, Colorado: Green Mountain Press, 1970), Forward by Paul L. Essert, p. xii.

[19]Ely, Adult Education, p. 121.

relationship, Denver Opportunity School became very much like a community college with a vocational emphasis.

Today the Opportunity School works with local industry in setting up training courses to meet the needs of individual firms or industries. There is also a General Education program that is concerned with teaching those living in economically depressed areas as well as a Homemaking Department that is concerned with meeting the current needs of the community by offering courses such as "Foods for Thrifty Families" and "Home Decoration on a Shoestring Budget."[20]

The Opportunity School is often used by the government to administer government educational training programs. Some of those that it has administered include the Manpower Development Training Act, Project Head Start, and the Metro State College Program. The latter was designed to train more professionals to meet the needs of an economy of specialization.

It is evident that the Denver Opportunity School will continue to cooperate with local industry, service organizations, educational institutions, and government to help meet the needs of the citizenry. Today it is much larger than it was in 1916. It has become established in the community and it is much more organized, but it still retains the core idea in all of its classes--a personal approach to each unique person as it works with him or her and the Denver community.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1936 was an example of a large bureaucratic structure containing an informal educational

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[20]Bluemel, Opportunity School, p. 221.

structure. In the midst of agricultural extension training, occupation education, health education, and education for parenthood, there was a loosely structured educational program for labor groups, the purpose of which was to select members of labor unions and train them to conduct open forums with their local membership.

This training was done through classes by volunteers and according to Dr. Floyd Reeves, former Director of Personnel for the TVA, the classes were well taught:

> With but one or two exceptions, all the classes I visited were well taught. This is somewhat surprising in view of the fact that more than half of those engaged in teaching are voluntary teachers carrying on their teaching work without pay during the hours when they are not engaged on their regular job.[21]

After their training was completed, these leaders conducted open forums within their local unions encouraging participants to freely discuss problems, suggestions, and ideas to improve their lives. An outgrowth of this program was a general forum open to all members of all unions for the discussion of social, economic, and governmental problems.

Dr. Reeves summarizes his research on the TVA training program by applauding its voluntary nature:

> In my opinion one of the most valuable aspects of the training program of the Tennessee Valley Authority is its voluntary nature. Employees may participate or not as they see fit. Training is taken without credit. One of the most severe indictments of our public schools, colleges, and universities has been the system of grades, credits, and degrees employed. These are all artificial rewards. Yet, as a result of the system, students frequently become more interested in securing grades or credits or degrees than in securing an education. In the Tennessee Valley Authority

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[21]"Adult Education as Related to the Tennessee Valley Authority," School and Society, Vol. 44 (August 29, 1936), p. 266.

> program, these artificial rewards are lacking. Those who participate in this program do so primarily for the educational values that they hope to receive. If they are not interested in education they do not take part in educational activities. If they are interested, they can usually find some opportunity for participation.[22]

Even colleges and universities have been known to develop programs free of certification, accreditation, and other formalities commonly associated with higher education. Usually an innovative, community-oriented administrator or professor develops such programs and uses the college or university as a sponsor.

Such an individual, Dr. Eugene Johnson, designed two separate programs during the mid-fifties. First, he was the architect of the Community Education Project of the San Bernardino Valley College in California which was supported through the Fund for Adult Education. Using supplementary readings printed by two valley-wide newspapers and several radio stations that broadcast the program, the project involved one thousand people in ninety-seven groups who met to discuss the themes presented and issues raised in a program entitled First Ways of Mankind. Later the project used the same format for a program about Jeffersonian Heritage.[23]

According to Malcolm Knowles, a remarkable after-effect of this project was an increase in the creativity and interdependence with other community institutions:

> After using these radio programs, the Community Education Project began the creation of its own dramatic radio discussion programs. One mass media discussion program entitled The Living Generation was the result of the cooperation of the county libraries of

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Knowles, Adult Education, p. 128.

> Riverside and San Bernardino; six commercial radio stations that serve the Inland Empire; and two newspapers with valley-wide coverage. . . . These radio programs included not only scripts and original music, but also supplementary reading materials, bibliographies, participants manuals and special manuals for discussion leaders.[24]

When Dr. Johnson moved to Washington University, he developed his combined media program a step further. There he founded the St. Louis Metroplex Assembly--a six- to ten-week program that presented a weekly issue on television. Each of the participating groups discussed the ideas presented in these programs and then telephoned their conclusions and questions into the station. These conclusions and questions were then utilized as the basis for a half-hour concluding television discussion. Not only did Dr. Johnson develop his original idea into a weekly operation, he also transformed an idea of one-way communication (Community Education Project) into two-way communication, thus making the project a dialogue combining input with output.

Both of Dr. Johnson's programs attempted to reach a cross-section of the population in their communities. This goal was almost reached by promoting the program through a network of churches, businesses, community organizations, service organizations, government agencies, and tenants' projects.

Dr. Johnson's projects inspired others to attempt similar projects, but most of these dealt with a specific community issue and as a result, they lasted for only a short time. Even Dr. Johnson's projects failed to operate after a number of years. According to Dr. Johnson, "The San Bernardino Project folded about two years after I

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[24] Ibid.

left. My successor did not have the degree of commitment necessary to continue it because he became interested in city politics."[25] The St. Louis Metroplex also became defunct due to several reasons, but according to Dr. Johnson, the main one was a lack of institutional commitment:

> When I left there were funds for three or four years. They decided to use some of these funds for a magazine that was to serve the same purpose that the programs did, but the university changed direction and decided to direct their efforts towards other goals.[26]

Currently, Dr. Johnson is developing the Atlanta 2000 project--a project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities to use a monthly television program on a local NBC-TV affiliate to stimulate discussion among community residents on the subject of Future Talk. The format of this project will be very similar to that employed at the St. Louis Metroplex.

Unlike his previous projects, Dr. Johnson feels Atlanta 2000 has the components necessary to make it an ongoing program: 1) the involvement of a cross-section of the people and institutions in the community; 2) an assurance of financial support; and 3) a core of good leadership.[27]

Dr. Johnson implemented structures that utilized the mass media to stimulate discussion among community residents. The developers of free universities, another precursor to learning networks that evolved from an established institution, stimulated community people to design

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[25]Eugene Johnson, telephone interview, December 11, 1977.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

their own programs (courses and classes) to share with other community residents.

By removing all traditional formalities (credentials, degrees, tests, age separations, etc.) and by inviting anyone in the community or university to teach, the free university has taken a community approach to education that involves active participation by many community members.

Since their onset in the 60's, free universities have tended to reflect the culture, mood, and background of their communities. For this reason, each free university is different. There is no blanket description for free universities; merely patterns, Even the definition reflects this diversity. According to Greg Marsello:

> The Free University Network, the national association of free universities, defines a free u as an organization offering ungraded, unaccredited classes, activities and programs to the general public. Anyone can volunteer to teach a subject, lead an activity, or coordinate a program, and the learning content and procedure is entirely up to the facilitator and learners.[28]

Thus, some free universities are university-oriented--their staff, students, and volunteer instructors primarily coming from colleges and universities. Others are community-oriented--their courses designed and taught primarily by community residents. Still others started out with a university orientation and gradually drifted into the community. The latter was the case with the University For Man (UFM), a free university serving 47,000 people in Manhattan, Kansas.

> In seven years, UFM has evolved from a predominantly college student-oriented organization into an agency currently offering

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[28]Greg Marsello, How to Start a Free University (Manhattan, Kansas: The Free University Network, 1978), p. 4.

> educational experiences to a diverse clientele within the Manhattan area. This focus on the entire community has become evident in several ways. First, according to the most recent enrollment survey, approximately 50% of the program's participants are other than college students. A second measure--highly encouraging--is that 1973-74 marked the first year partial support was received from a local community organization.[29]

Recently UFM received federal funds to promote the development of similar programs in at least ten other Kansas communities. Free universities in general, including UFM, are trying to appeal to a larger audience today since they "see their mission as being community organizations serving all people in the community: workers, housewives, farmers, elderly and students."[30] There is a central headquarters, The Free University Network, that serves as a communication link between the more than 200 free universities now in existence. It also has a program to assist other communities in starting free universities and a program to provide technical assistance to existing free universities.

The programs of Riverside and Evanston Churches, the Denver Opportunity School, TVA forums, San Bernardino Community Education Project, St. Louis Metroplex, and free universities began as supplements to the established institution. With the Evanston and Riverside churches, the church itself developed these programs. In the case of the Denver Opportunity School, San Bernardino Community Education Project, and the St. Louis Metroplex, an insightful individual created a program. The TVA forum was started by a section of a large bureaucratic government

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[29]Joseph K. Rippetoe and Sue C. Maes, "Education as Community Activity: University For Man," Educational Considerations, Vol. 2, No. 1, (Fall, 1974), p. 6.

[30]"An Intro to Free U's," Free University Network News, Vol. 2, No. 4, (November, 1976), p. 1.

agency and the free universities were started by some dissatisfied students. But, in each case, there were needs not being fulfilled by the primary institution and an individual or group of individuals took it upon themselves to create a structure to meet these needs.

Listing and Referral Services

As adult education evolved in this country, a vast number of institutions became involved in adult education. This multitude of programs has become so complex that individuals needed and still need guidance to select the proper educational program for their needs. To meet this need several structures evolved to connect persons with institutions, organizations, or other individuals. While they go by a variety of names, for the purpose of this paper they will be referred to as "listing and referral services."

Perhaps the most simplified version of a listing and referral service is typified by the high school counselor. A high school counselor's primary function, in addition to personal counseling, is to refer the high school student to an agency, work-study program, college, or any other intitution the counselor thinks is appropriate in fulfilling the needs of the student. These needs could be financial, psychological, emotional, or academic. The counselor is effective because he has resource files that contain necessary information for connecting the student with books, agencies, colleges, businesses, military services, etc.

In 1935, the New York Adult Education Council (NYAEC) developed the notion of a high school counselor one step further. This newly-

formed organization listed and classified New York City agencies, schools, and organizations for adult education; organized them into a file; and within six months after its founding could

> . . . tell you anything you want to know from where you can learn Sanskrit to the price of tickets at the Polo grounds. . . . During their first year of operation 13,869 New Yorkers wrote, telephoned, or came to the office of the New York Adult Education Council. They wanted to know such things as where they could learn how to design corsets, understand opera, make cheese, assay gold. Some of the persons seeking this information were bored, some disheartened, some ambitiously intelligent. Some had leisure and wanted help in using it agreeably. . . . All of them were seeking that commodity so difficult to find in New York, information. Ninety-one per cent of them were given the information they sought.[31]

Like the counselor, this service was effective because the program had organized resource files that provided an annotated directory of the educational opportunities in New York City.

The NYAEC was not the only institution that came to perform a listing and referral service. Traditionally, libraries have been clearinghouses for books. But as society became more complex, library staff persons began to realize that an increasing number of patrons needed additional service to gather the information they needed. Thus, libraries took a more active role in assisting the patrons.

In the early 1900's, libraries developed the Reader Advisory Service to assist patrons in determining the best selection of books to learn about a particular subject area. A patron would either call or go to the library, tell the librarian the topic he or she wanted to learn, and then the librarian would guide him or her in the selection of an organized program of study which was designed for speed, comprehen-

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[31] Olive O. Van Horn, Individua[illegible]tion in Adult Education (New York: New York Adult Education [illegible] 1936), p. 5.

siveness, and simplicity.

Today, the library is taking an even more active role in the community. According to Grace T. Stevenson, Deputy Executive Director and Director of the Office for Adult Education of the American Library Association, the library

> . . . serves as an instrument of continuous self-education for the individual reader; it is a materials resource for other agencies and organizations and their clientele; it assists other agencies in the presentation of those programs by providing personnel, skills, materials or physical facilities. Many libraries perform a fourth function by presenting educational programs of their own--lectures, concerts, discussion groups--a variety of activities on a wide range of subjects, using many techniques.[32]

The onset of the seventies has added another dimension to the libraries. Due to the increasing complexity of gathering information, and the inadequacy of conventional institutions to provide this service, libraries have been designing a service to meet this need. In library circles, they are commonly known as information and referral centers. These centers have two primary objectives: 1) to determine the most effective delivery system for the non-traditional library patron--those that do not know how to use the directories and other references in a library; and 2) to provide efficient and adequate referrals to clients whose needs the library cannot meet.

In 1972, the Detroit Public Library designed the Telephone Information Program (TIP). It has a central number that is advertised in the community for anyone to call to receive information. The TIP staff will either answer callers' questions directly or else refer

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[32]Malcolm Knowles, Handbook of Adult Education in the United States (Chicago: Adult Education Association, 1960), p. 303.

them to an organization or an individual who can provide the answer. According to Rich Nagler, Assistant Head of TIP Services, TIP currently handles over 200 calls a day. Ten percent of those deal with recreational needs and a smaller percentage are calls dealing with educational needs. The first year TIP was in operation they received 35,000 calls. Now they are receiving over 75,000. Their staff has grown from five members during their first year of operation and now has twelve. Advertising is done primarily through Public Service Announcements which have been easy for them to secure. Funding has been through the federal government and area agencies on aging.[33]

Another information and referral center is located in Chicago. In 1969, The Chicago Public Library Information Service (CPLIS) was established. According to Janet Bean, Division Chief of General Information Service, "It's purpose was to cut through 'red tape' to allow greater client access to the library. It would primarily serve as an information center due to the adequate number of referral centers in Chicago."[34]

CPLIS receives approximately 1,000 calls a day. Each call is dealt with in a 5-minute time frame. Calls longer than that are given referrals to books, directories, or other agencies. Unlike most of the 24 other information and referral centers in the United States which are 90% referral service and 10% information, the calls received by CPLIS are 80% information-related and 20% referral-related.

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[33]Rich Nagler, telephone interview, December 12, 1977.

[34]Janet Bean, telephone interview, February 8, 1978.

CPLIS is advertised through newspapers, television Public Service Announcements, and through posters and brochures. In 1968, they added a Spanish referral service that provides referrals to Spanish-speaking people in medicine, citizenship information, and English classes.

According to Janet Bean:

> Every library in the United States has provided and still provides information and referrals, but there are approximately twenty-four that provide it in as systematized a fashion as does TIP and CPLIS. But these types of services are becoming more popular.[35]

It appears that the number of information and referral centers will grow as more libraries find a need to make information more accessible to their patrons.

Another example of a listing and referral service is FISH--an emergency volunteer center which was founded in 1967. Father Howell, an episcopal minister in Chicago, began the service as a lay ministry to encourage neighbors to help each other. He named it after a movement in England in which a fish on the front window of a household represented a haven for assistance.

According to Ted Matzner, present Physical Coordinator of FISH:

> Persons using FISH services call a central number to receive referrals to agencies and individuals in securing help. Ninety per cent of the calls received involve someone needing a ride. The remainder concern babysitting, assistance in reading and shopping, finding a place to reside or any other short-term need. If the caller needs help more than once they are referred to an agency to continue assistance.[36]

Most of the volunteers and users of FISH are elderly people,

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ted Matzner, telephone interview, January 18, 1978.

but the service is available to all ages. Currently, there are two FISH centers in Chicago and thirty in the surrounding suburbs. In addition, there are ten other centers in the United States. All FISH centers are sponsored by the churches in their area and receive additional funds through local fund raising events.

Metro-Help, a crisis line in Chicago that also has a ride board and a National Runaway Switchboard, was founded in 1970. This telephone-operated service allows youth to discuss emotional, drug-related, family, medical, or sexual problems with trained volunteers. The ride board connects persons that need rides in cities across the United States with drivers needing riders, and The National Runaway Switchboard is a toll-free number facilitating conference calls and messages between parents and runaways. According to a Metro-Help volunteer:

> Metro-Help during July 1975-1976 received almost 80,000 calls. Of these calls, 18,000 were to the local crisis line, 18,000 to the ride board, and 40,000 to the National Runaway Switchboard. Average age of these callers was 22.0 years old.[37]

Today, Metro-Help is funded through private grants, donations, and federal assistance for the Runaway Switchboard.

Organizations like Metro-Help, FISH, other listing and referral services, and many of the precursors to learning networks described in this chapter were developed to enable persons living in a complex society to become more aware of and gain greater access to the educational, recreational, and other types of options available to them. When those options did not exist, a few individuals and institutions took the necessary strides to create new services for people in their

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[37]Metro-Help volunteer, telephone interview, February 17, 1978.

communities.

Even though the participants in the CIDOC seminars paid little attention to historical antecedents, it appears that what they did was not markedly different from what was done by several groups and individuals discussed in the previous pages--they identified and defined a problem, analyzed the ways existing institutions or individuals were trying to solve the problem, searched for different ways to approach the problem, and designed some type of a program that would lead to a viable solution to the problem. In essence, that is the process out of which the learning network concept evolved. In the remainder of this chapter, a closer examination of the historical development of learning networks will be described.

Development of Learning Networks in the United States

Illich and Reimer had invited disenchanted educators (e.g. Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenberg, John Holt, Ron Gross and others) from many parts of the western hemisphere to participate in the CIDOC sessions. Aside from critically analyzing the process of schooling, the key task before the seminar participants was to find a way to tap the unused, underutilized educational resources that exist in a community (especially, the "other 97%") and then find a simple, inexpensive way to make those resources available to members of the community. To accomplish this objective, the seminar participants concluded that one possible approach might be to establish a network (or "web") of community residents who would be willing to teach, learn, and share their educational and recreational interests with one another.

Three of the seminar participants returned to the United States in the early 1970's eager to find out whether or not the network model would be used by community residents. Paul Knatz, an educator, established FLEX (Free Learning Exchange) and operated the program out of his apartment in New York City; Bill Spikowski, an undergraduate from Northwestern University, worked with a group of people in St. Louis to establish the Learning Resource Exchange; and Denis Detzel, pulled together a handful of Northwestern students (including this writer) to help start the Evanston Learning Exchange (the name was later changed to "The Learning Exchange" as the program was expanded to serve the entire metropolitan Chicago area).

As will be noted in Chapter IV, FLEX and the Learning Resource Exchange are no longer active after having been in operation for three and six years respectively. The Learning Exchange in Evanston (TLE) has continued to thrive over the years as a result of support from corporations and foundations, cooperation of the mass media, contributions from network participants, and the efforts of a dedicated staff.

The success of TLE has been described in a number of national publications (Reader's Digest, The Wall Street Journal, Psychology Today, McCall's, Christian Science Monitor, Time, U.S. News & World Report, etc.), books, and television programs like NBC's TODAY show. As a result of this exposure, TLE has received thousands of inquiries from people around the country and abroad who wanted information about how to start similar programs for their communities. Until the publication of The Learning Exchange, a 150-page "how to" manual (co-authored by this writer and Diane R. Kinishi, the present Executive Director of

TLE) in 1977 and the implementation of a series of TLE technical assistance programs (made possible by a two-year HEW grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) in mid-1977, TLE was not in a position to provide much help to other individuals and groups who wanted to replicate the model. Nevertheless, at least fifty-two networks have been established in the United States, (there are also a few in other countries, e.g., Canada, England, Australia, Japan, India, and Iran). Some were developed as independent, community-based organizations and others were affiliated with established institutions, mainly colleges, public libraries, churches, community agencies, and free universities. Below is a list of all known learning networks as of January 1, 1978 (* denotes inactive status, I--Independent, L--library-affiliated, U--university-affiliated, F--free university-affiliated, R--religious institution-affiliated, C--community agency-affiliated, S--public school-affiliated).

Name	Location
*BSI Learning Exchange	Carmel, California (C)
The Binghamton Learning Exchange	Binghamton, New York (I)
*Chico Learning Exchange	Chico, California (I)
*Come Together	Glenwood, Illinois (I)
*The Community Learning Exchange	Columbus, Ohio (R)
Community Learning Exchange	N. Providence, Rhode Island (I)
Community Learning Exchange	Syracuse, New York (I)
The DeKalb Exchange	DeKalb, Illinois (I)
*Eugene Learning Exchange	Eugene, Oregon (I)

Name	Location
Fort Wayne Learning Exchange	Fort Wayne, Indiana (I)
Free Learning Exchange	Charlottesville, Virginia (U)
*Free Learning Exchange	Indianapolis, Indiana (I)
*Free Learning Exchange	New York, New York (I)
Front Free School	Burton, Michigan (C)
*Fox Valley Learning Exchange	St. Charles, Illinois (I)
Full Circle Resource Exchange	Springfield, Illinois (I)
*Hotline Exchange	Richmond, Virginia (C)
*The Human Resources Exchange	Glen Ellyn, Illinois (U)
*Ithaca Learning Exchange	Ithaca, New York (I)
*Knowledge Exchange	Santa Monica, California (I)
Lansing Area Learning Exchange	Lansing, Michigan (L)
*The Learning Connection	Pittsfield, Massachusetts (I)
The Learning Community	Southfield, Michigan (I)
*Learning Exchange	Hempstead, New York (I)
*Learning Exchange	Jacksonville, Illinois (I)
*Learning Exchange	Milwaukee, Wisconsin (F)
*Learning Exchange	San Francisco, California (C)
*Learning Exchange	Urbana, Illinois (U)
*The Learning Exchange	Ann Arbor, Michigan (U)
*The Learning Exchange	Birmingham, Michigan (I)
*The Learning Exchange	Burlington, Vermont (I)
*The Learning Exchange	East Brunswick, New Jersey (L)
The Learning Exchange	Evanston, Illinois (I)

Name	Location
*The Learning Exchange	Greenfield, Massachusettes (L)
*The Learning Exchange	Los Angeles, California (I)
*The Learning Exchange	New Haven, Connecticut (I)
Learning Exchange Network	Providence, Rhode Island (U)
*Learning Net	Madison, Wisconsin (C)
*Learning Network	Minneapolis, Minnesota (S)
The Learning Network	Austin Texas (I)
*The Learning Network	Seattle, Washington (I)
*Learning Resource Exchange	St. Louis, Missouri (I)
LINK	Iowa City, Iowa (I)
*Opening Networks	Baltimore, Maryland (I)
Parallel	Kalamazoo, Michigan (U)
*Putnum Westchester Learning Exchange	Lake Peekskill, New York (I)
*Spectra-Center	Upsilenti, Michigan (I)
STM Exchange	Anderson, Indiana (I)
*Tacoma Learning Exchange	Tacoma, Washington (I)
Tallahassee Learning Exchange	Tallahassee, Florida (L)
Trade-Off	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (I)
*Vina's Human Resource Center	St. Petersburg, Florida (C)

Table A on the next page summarizes the affiliation status of active and inactive learning networks in the United States.

TABLE A. Affiliation Status of Learning Networks

Affiliation \ Status	Active	Inactive	Total
Independent	12	21	33
University	3	3	6
Community Agency	1	5	6
Library	2	2	4
Free University		1	1
Religious Institution		1	1
Public School		1	1

The table below indicates in which parts of the United States learning networks have been established.

TABLE B. Regional Locations of Learning Networks

Region \ Status	Active	Inactive	Total
East	6	11	17
South	2	2	4
Midwest	10	13	23
West		8	8

For the most part, the two tables indicate that the development of learning networks in the United States to date has taken place predominently in the Midwest and that most of the organizations were not

affiliated with established institutions. At the time of this writing, Ed Dobmeyer, Director of National Programs for TLE, indicates that at least eight new learning networks are in an advanced stage of planning. Most of them should be in operation by the end of 1978.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Description of Variables

In order to assess the state of the art of learning networks after seven years of independent development and to determine the chief characteristics that account for the high failure rate of the concept, this study will focus on seven major operational variables that may be critical to the development of successful learning networks: 1) general orientation reflected in legal status, 2) philosophy (motivation of founders), 3) funding, 4) organization of information, 5) communication programs, 6) client access, and 7) management and administration. In the following pages each variable will be described in terms of its assumed importance to the functioning of a learning network.

Legal Status

There are basically four types of legal incorporation categories into which learning networks may fall: for profit, not-for-profit, affiliated with a sponsoring agency (either profit or not-for-profit), or unincorporated. Whichever legal status a learning network chooses could have a direct bearing on the success of the overall program. If, for example, an organization decides to maintain an unincorporated status, some people in the community may be concerned about the

organization's legitimacy and may view its services with suspicion. This may be especially true of people in the media. In Chicago, radio and television stations will not provide public service announcements for organizations that have not attained a not-for-profit status. Moreover, the Internal Revenue Service will not consider an organization's request for a tax-exempt status without the organization first acquiring its not-for-profit incorporation papers from the state in which the organization is located. And since contributions are not tax-deductible if given to an organization that is not tax-exempt, foundations, corporations, and individuals have little or no incentive to donate funds to an organization that has not been granted a tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service.

Learning networks that choose to affiliate with sponsoring institutions are likely to be confronted with a somewhat different set of problems. For example, it seems reasonable to expect that the market (population group) of an affiliated learning network is likely to correspond to or be limited by the market of the sponsoring institution (e.g., a learning network affiliated with a library will probably attract library patrons and a learning network affiliated with a university will probably attract college students). While there is nothing inherently wrong with targeting the service to a specific group of people, there may however be some negative consequences that can result from such a limiting process (e.g., the service may lack a diversity of subject listings, there may be a lower satisfaction rate among network participants because of a limited number of teacher options, and those community residents who are most in need of the kinds of

educational services a learning network can provide may not be reached).

Aside from limiting the scope of the service, an affiliated learning network is likely to be vulnerable to a variety of pressures from the sponsoring institution that independent networks would not have to face, such as, limited flexibility in developing new programs, constraints on certain types of subjects that network participants may want to pursue, and the threat of budget cuts that could adversely affect the quality and scope of the network's services.

On the other hand, there can be some very distinct advantages associated with affiliation. If the sponsoring organization makes a strong institutional commitment to a learning network and mandates that sufficient funds and other resources be directed to the development of the program, the major tasks before the network organizers can be somewhat easier to accomplish. Whereas the organizers of independent programs have to devote a substantial amount of time to raising funds to develop their programs, organizers of affiliated programs can concentrate their energies on developing the systems necessary for providing a quality service. Moreover, if the sponsoring institution has a good reputation in the community, it is quite likely that the learning network could obtain instant legitimacy and receive favorable publicity simply on the basis of its connection with the sponsoring institution.

Philosophy (Motivation of Founders)

Just as the legal status of a learning network is likely to have a direct effect on the organization, the philosophy of the founders

may also have a direct effect on the service. It seems reasonable to expect that the motivation for establishing a learning network will permeate many facets of the operation and set the tone and direction of the organization. If, for example, the organization has a radical orientation, it is likely that such a viewpoint will be reflected in the publicity and materials of the organization; thus attracting a population group that shares the radical viewpoint and alienating people with different viewpoints. This would probably be true both in terms of the clients served by the network and also in terms of the staff that are attracted to operate the network.

The philosophy of the organizers of the program is also likely to influence the ease with which the organization can obtain: 1) grants and contributions from foundations and corporations; 2) air time from radio and television stations; 3) public service ad space in newspaper and magazines; and 4) the cooperation and support of a variety of community groups, churches, agencies, and other service institutions. It seems probable that if the philosophy of the organization is opposed to the prevailing mood of the community, the tasks before the operators of the learning network will be increasingly more difficult to accomplish; unless, of course, they can find a way to camouflage their real motives and convey an image more congruent with the dominant forces within the community.

The philosophy of learning networks could range from financial profit to the desire to overthrow or replace the present educational establishment. In between, it is likely that some learning networks will be motivated by a wish to provide: 1) supplementary educational

services (by working with established educational institutions and complementing their efforts to meet the educational needs of clients); or 2) community service (promoting interaction, cooperation, and sharing among community residents in ways that may be educational, recreational, or social--finding partners for games and sports, locating volunteers, exchanging plant cuttings, bartering professional services, etc.).

Funding

As with virtually all organizations, learning networks need to have some means of financial support in order to pay for staff salaries, rent, telephones, postage, office equipment, printing and other items necessary for providing a quality service. This support can be obtained from either external or internal sources. The external sources include: corporate contributions, foundation grants, government grants or subsidies, wealthy philanthropists, and community agencies like church charities or the United Way. The internal sources include: client fees or contributions, institutional memberships, sale of promotional items, speech honoraria, and technical assistance consultation.

To obtain financial support through either external or internal means requires a high degree of sophistication on the part of individuals responsible for an organization's development effort. Before seeking external funds, a needs assessment (a determination of how much it will cost to provide the service) must be made, data must be collected on potential funding sources, a priority scheme must be established to determine which funding sources are most likely to provide support,

grant requests must be written in accordance with the potential grantors' guidelines, and introductory and follow-up strategies must then be planned and implemented. Since funding agencies customarily receive requests for grants far in excess of their capability to respond favorably, the competition for the philanthropic dollar is keen.

In regard to internal means of support, the process is equally complex and time-consuming. A reasonable amount of front-end marketing research must be done. Questions like the following need to be answered: Should the program be supported through fees for services rendered, a percentage of teachers' fees, required memberships, voluntary memberships, or some other type of fee arrangements? What is the optimum membership amount? What is an appropriate fee structure? Depending on the fee or membership structure, what markets are most likely to respond favorably? What communication strategies need to be employed to attract the selected market groups to the program? After they have made contact with the network office, should clients be provided with the listing and referral service and then be solicited for a contribution or vice versa? Is the solicitation made via telephone or direct mail? How should the telephone solicitation be worded? What printed materials should be enclosed in the direct-mail solicitation? Should the materials be printed on high or low quality paper? Should different kinds of fee or membership structures be tested? If so, how can this be done without "contaminating" the market? Should a gift membership program be developed? Should there be some type of bonus or premium for members or contributors? If so, what should be included and how much will it cost? What type of a renewal program should be

employed? Should the entire solicitation approach be philanthropically-oriented, use-oriented, or benefits-oriented?

The answers to the above questions (as well as many others) and the action taken by the learning network are likely to have a dramatic effect on the overall program. Aside from providing the necessary funds to expand and improve services, the type or types of support that a learning network seeks will certainly have an effect on the survival of the project. If, for example, a learning network relies for its support on too few external sources, the organization is particularly vulnerable if those sources decide to withdraw their support. Moreover, it would seem that the more an organization relies on internal support mechanisms, the more directly accountable the learning network will be to the people it serves. If the recipients of the service do not receive what they perceive to be a valuable service, they may refrain from supporting the program. Taken on a large scale, such a process could quickly lead a learning network into an inactive condition.

Organization of Information

The core of an effective learning network is the information system used to match network participants in accordance with their educational and recreational interests. The quality of the service is largely a function of the accuracy, completeness, and accessibility of the information stored in a learning network's data base. This information includes such items as: participants' names, addresses, and phone numbers; subjects or topics participants register to teach, learn, discuss, or pursue; descriptions of special circumstances for

each participant--teachers' fee arrangements, learners' willingness to pay a fee, one-to-one or group session preferences, teachers' qualifications (experiential background relative to the subjects taught), willingness to travel, etc.

The data-base configuration of a learning network is likely to be one of two types: 1) hard copy--index cards systematically arranged in accordance with usage category (teacher, learner, interest-match), subject, geographic location, and fee; or 2) computerized--on-line, batch, or time-share coupled with microfiche.

Aside from developing and maintaining a data input, storage, and retrieval system that expedites and streamlines the process of providing pertinent contact information (i.e., names and phone numbers of appropriate people) to network participants, it is also necessary to devise some means of periodically updating the data stored in the information bank. This is especially important since many people are apt to change their interests as time goes on and many people are also apt to change their addresses. It has been estimated that the average U.S. citizen changes his/her place of residence once every five years. Therefore, a learning network data-base that is unattended for one year is likely to be at least 20% out-of-date. This, in turn, would effect the quality and accuracy of the organization's services.

Communication Programs

The ultimate success of a learning network may be contingent upon the number of participants in the network. More people actively participating in the service leads to more resources and offerings,

thus increasing the likelihood that individual learners and interest-matches will more easily find people in and around their neighborhoods who can help meet their educational and recreational needs. In view of the presumed size/success interrelationship, it is important for learning networks to develop appropriate communication programs for attracting large numbers of people to their service. In order to do so, considerable time and effort must be spent in developing and maintaining publicity programs through a variety of media.

Some of the different communication programs include: 1) radio--public service announcements (PSA's), talk show interviews, and regular programs produced by learning network staff; 2) television--PSA's, interview programs and news specials, and regular programs produced by network staff; 3) newspaper--public service advertisements, feature articles, press releases, and regular columns written by network staff; 4) local distribution of printed promotional material--posters, take-one brochures, newsletters, and catalogs; 5) institutional interfaces for promotional purposes--schools, libraries, and businesses; 6) community activities--learning fairs, bazaars, and teacher displays and demonstrations; and 7) public speaking--at nursing homes, churches, community groups, etc.

While it is important to have a variety of publicity outlets, it is equally important to have effective messages to deliver. An effective message for a learning network is one that catches the attention of people, communicates what people can do with a learning network, provides people with a way to make contact with a learning network, and, most important, motivates people to call or write a

learning network for more information about ways they can participate in the program.

To develop an effective message usually entails a substantial amount of market research, i.e., determining what features of a learning network's service are most attractive to which groups of people, selecting the most appropriate media outlets for reaching the greatest number of people at the lowest cost possible, developing and testing various ways to communicate the message, and ascertaining which message is most effective in attracting people to the program.

Once a tested message is proven effective, it is then important to maximize the impact of the total communication program by using the same message, or when appropriate, slight variations of it, in all media outlets. A consistent message comprehensively employed is likely to reinforce itself by striking people from many different directions, thus improving the chances of the message having the desired impact--acquainting people with the benefits of network participation and motivating them to make contact.

According to some advertising experts, the average person in the United States is bombarded by approximately 1,600 messages a day--through billboard signs, radio and television commercials, newspaper advertisements, etc. They are prodded to buy this product, vacation in that country, use this service, and send for that catalog. Some businesses spend millions of dollars each month just to keep their message in front of the public. Because the competition for people's attention is so keen, it is particularly important that learning networks take advantage of whatever free or inexpensive publicity outlets that

are available and systematically use those messages which have proven to be effective.

Client Access

The ease with which community residents gain access to a learning network probably plays some role in the success of the overall program. There are basically two access functions that should be considered: 1) access requirements--the procedures that a prospective network participant must go through in order to gain access to the names, phone numbers, and addresses of network participants having similar or complementary interests; and 2) types of access--the physical means by which participants make contact with a network office and receive client information relevant to their needs and offerings.

The access requirements of a learning network could range from having to pay mandatory registration fees along with elaborate name and address verification procedures to having no access requirements at all (i.e., a person who never contacted a learning network could receive client information at the time of his/her first call to the service). While access requirements are likely to hinder some people in the use of the service, they also provide a semblance of security and protection for network participants. Moreover, if the access requirements entail some sort of fee or contribution request, the learning network may be able to benefit financially from the process.

In regard to the physical means by which participants make contact with a network office and receive client information, there are basically three types of access--telephone, in-person, and postal

service. Each type of access would seem to have certain advantages and disadvantages. The telephone method, while low in cost and highly accessible for most people, does not afford network participants the opportunity to interact face-to-face with resource counselors. The in-person method would permit such personal interaction, but it would be obtained at a greater cost to the client, especially in terms of time and money needed for travel to the network office. The postal service, while relatively inexpensive, has a longer turn around time, i.e., it would take longer for a participant to make his/her needs and offerings known to the network office and then still more time would be needed to get the pertinent contact information back to the person. It would seem that a mixture of different access types would be necessary in order to meet specific needs. This, of course, would have to be weighed against the total cost of providing for the different means of access.

Management and Administration

Establishing and maintaining a learning network is by no means a simple task. The systems needed to operate a successful program are numerous and, in some cases, quite complex. While the concept of matching a person with an educational need to another person who can help satisfy that need sounds, on the surface, rather elementary, the execution of that concept is probably much more complicated than any of the radical thinkers at CIDOC would have ever imagined. To manage and administer these complex systems is probably the major challenge confronting all learning networks. In order to create

a successful program, it is necessary to find sensible, cost-effective, and humane ways to orchestrate the people, resources, and activities involved in operating the service.

The management and administration of a learning network involves two major considerations: 1) human resource organization--board of directors, advisory board, full-time staff, part-time staff, and volunteers; and 2) documentation--job descriptions, organizational charts, training programs, goals, plans, and procedural manuals.

In regard to the organization of human resources, learning networks are likely to utilize systems similar to those of many other not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, wherein the board of directors is legally responsible for the financial and operational policies of the program and the staff is responsible for carrying out the organization's policies.

The board of directors of a learning network can take many different forms. For example, board members can be chosen on the basis of their philosophical interest in the program, their participation in the program as users, their proven track record in helping to implement the program, and their reputation in the community as concerned and involved leaders. Generally, it would seem that the more influential a board of directors is, the more legitimate the organization will be perceived in the eyes of funders, the media, business, and most segments of the public. Selecting people for the board of directors who are "well connected" will probably make the tasks of fund raising, publicity, and community cooperation and support much easier. Moreover, a strong, influential board, comprised of leaders from business, law, education,

communications, community service, etc., usually will have the ability to deal with the complex, expanding systems involved with the development and maintenence of an effective learning network.

To aid the board of directors, it may be useful to have an advisory board. Customarily, advisory board members have no legal responsibilities but are able to provide specific types of technical assistance that are important to the success of the overall program, e.g., advertising, graphic design, computerization, direct-mail and telephone solicitation, and market research. Choosing a well-rounded advisory board can be very helpful in developing a successful program.

Equally important to the functioning of a successful learning network are the chief administrator and the staff of the program. In view of the complex systems required to provide the service, the chief administrator and staff should have the capability of formulating and executing whatever operational plans and strategies are necessary in the conduct of a learning network's affairs. To have an effective program, personnel are needed who have experience with administration, bookkeeping and accounting, media relations, writing, development, information systems design, community outreach, graphic design, research, photography, etc.

The staff members who are responsible for providing the listing and referral services to network participants are perhaps the most important element of the human resource organization. They are the "front line" of the service; they deal directly with the public whose needs the organization is striving to meet. Because of their responsibilities, it is important that they be personable, competent, detail-

oriented, articulate, and concerned about the welfare of the people in the network.

To complement the human resource organization of a learning network, it is likely that a substantial degree of documentation is necessary. As an organization becomes larger and more complex, there is a need to record the purpose of the organization, its short-term and long-term goals, the objectives that must be accomplished in order to achieve the goals, the strategies employed to accomplish the objectives, and the evaluation procedures used to determine how effectively the organization is achieving its goals.

Another aspect of documentation deals not only with what the organization does, but also with what the organization looks like from a structural point of view. An organizational chart is usually needed in order to determine how the various parts of a complex service fit together. Job descriptions are also needed in order for staff members to know exactly what their responsibilities are and how they relate to the responsibilities of other staff members.

Perhaps the most important aspect of documentation is the process of developing procedural manuals for virtually every system needed to operate a learning network. These manuals are necessary not only to train new staff members but also to guard against a situation wherein key staff members leave the organization and take with them (in their heads) the only working knowledge of the systems for which they were responsible. Such a situation can be particularly troublesome for an organization, especially in view of the presumed interconnection and interdependence of the various systems needed to keep a learning

network functioning in an effective manner.

While one part of a learning network has to be very people-oriented (i.e., dealing with network participants' needs and offerings and providing them with the contact information they request), the other part has to be very systems-oriented. It would seem that the larger a learning network grows, the more attention it has to give to both the "people" and the "systems" aspects of the organization. Without the necessary support systems, the people element would probably not be possible.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection for the examination of the above variables was accomplished through personal interviews with either the founders or chief administrators of twenty-eight learning networks. Eighteen were active models and the other ten were inactive (this writer was unsuccessful in locating the founders or chief administrators of the remaining twenty-four inactive models). On-site interviews were conducted at seven of the active programs: The Binghamton Learning Exchange, Lansing Area Learning Exchange, The DeKalb Exchange, The Learning Exchange of Evanston, Fort Wayne Learning Exchange, LINK of Iowa City, and The Learning Community in Southfield, Michigan. Except for in-person interviews with representatives from Trade-Off in Bethlehem, Parallel in Kalamazoo, and the Full Circle Resource Exchange in Springfield, Illinois (conducted in Evanston during TLE's first semi-annual national project directors meeting in December, 1977), the data from the remaining sites were collected via long distance telephone interviews.

For the purpose of this study, the active models were divided into two distinct groups--operational and incipient. The following definitions delineate each category of learning networks involved in this study:

Operational - a learning network that has been in continuous existence for more than a year as of January 1, 1978.

Incipient - a learning network that has been in continuous existence for a year or less as of January 1, 1978.

Inactive - a learning network that was once in operation but as of January 1, 1978 is no longer in existence.

The separation of the active models into the two groups (nine operational programs and nine incipient programs) was made in order to simplify the presentation and analysis of the data for the study. The incipient models, in many cases, had not been in operation a sufficient length of time to address some of the questions raised by an examination of the seven variables described above. By presenting the data within the three categories (operational, incipient and inactive), a more comprehensible state-of-the-art profile of the learning network movement should emerge. Moreover, the organizers of learning networks in the three categories will be able to compare more easily their own status or performance with the other models in the same category.

The data collection instrument for this study was a series of open-ended questions that this writer asked each of the interviewees. Below are the core questions that were included in the interview. They are arranged in accordance with the seven operational variables being examined:

General Information

Who started _____?

When was your program started?

How many people live in your service area?

How many people do you currently have on file?

What types of people are you serving in regard to age, race, educational background, and socioeconomic level?

What are your major problem areas and what are you doing to solve these problems?

What criteria do you use to determine the success of your organization?

What do you feel are the reasons why you are still in operation and many other learning networks are not?

Legal Status

Is your program incorporated as a not-for-profit organization?

If not, what type of incorporation do you have or do you intend to acquire?

Do you have a 501(C)3 letter of exemption from the Internal Revenue Service?

Philosophy (Motivation of Founders)

Why was _____ established?

Funding

How much capital did you have to start your program?

How is your program now financed?

What is your current operating budget?

What is your optimum operating budget?

If you have a self-support program, how does it work?

What percentage of your income do you derive from internal and external sources?

Organization of Information

What method of information input, retrieval, and storage do you use?

How does the system function?

How do you deal with the problems of updating and cross-referencing?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your information system?

Do you have a systematic program for obtaining feedback from your clients? If so, how does it work?

What kind of information do you generally receive?

Communication Programs

What major publicity networks have you developed and how do you utilize and maintain these networks?

How do you determine the effectiveness of your publicity?

What forms of publicity have you found to be the most effective?

What forms of publicity have you found to be the least effective?

Are you providing listing and referral services to any institutions? If so, what types of institutions and what kinds of services?

Are you involved in any contractual arrangements with these institutions?

Client Access

How do people access your program?

Do you have any access requirements?

Management and Administration

What are the short-term and long-term goals of your organization?

Do you have your goals recorded on paper?

Do you have a board of directors?

Do you have an advisory or other type of board?

How many members sit on each board?

How do the respective boards relate to your organization?

What are your boards' legal and operational responsibilities?

What criteria do you use in selecting board members?

What is your rationale for this criteria?

How often are your board members chosen and for how long to they serve?

How many staff members do you have? Full- and part-time? Volunteers?

Do you have an organizational chart outlining the structure and lines of responsibility of your board, staff, and volunteers?

Do you have a job description for each position in your organization?

What type of management process do you use to solve problems, plan strategies, and accomplish objectives?

How do you train your operators, volunteers, and other staff members?

Do you have a training manual?

Do you have flow charts describing how your information input, storage, and retrieval systems function?

These questions were asked of each interviewee involved in the study. For the inactive programs, the questions were stated in the past rather than the present tense. Also, the final question in the General Information section was reworded for the inactive programs to read: "What are the main reasons _____ is no longer in existence?" The answers to each question were recorded by this writer; and, in some instances, additional ad hoc questions were asked in order to provide for more information about how the respective learning networks dealt with each operational variable.

In the next chapter a synopsis of the data will be presented

on eight tables (seven for the operational variables and one for general information about the respective networks). This data will be presented in such a way that a comparative analysis of the networks participating in the study can be made. Then, based on the data collected during the interviews and this writer's seven years of experience with all facets of learning network operation, an attempt will be made to isolate those variables which seem to be most important for the continued operation of a learning network. In the final chapter, this writer will summarize his observations and make recommendations that seem appropriate.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

General Information

Table C on page 83 provides an overview of the twenty-eight learning networks examined by this study. Each network is analyzed in terms of: 1) time in existence; 2) number of participants on file; 3) population of the service area; 4) participation percentage (number of participants/population of service area); and 5) demographics of clientele. The names of the interviewees and their relationships with the respective networks are also indicated on Table C.

The average length of time that the operational models have been in existence is 3.7 years, with the longest being The Learning Exchange in Evanston at 6.5 years and the shortest being the Fort Wayne LE at 1.5 years. By definition, the incipient models have been in existence for a year or less. Their average time in existence is .39 years. For the ten inactive models included in this study, the average time in existence was 2.5 years. It should be pointed out, however, that this latter figure is probably uncharacteristically high for inactive models in general. Based on previous knowledge and informal communication over the years with some of the people involved in the development of the other twenty-four inactive models, this writer would estimate that the average life-span has been closer to a year or less

TABLE C -- GENERAL INFORMATION

	LEARNING NETWORK / ITEM	Time in Existence (in years)	Participants in Files	Population of Service Area	Participation Percentage	Demographics of Clientele	Network Representative Interviewed	Interviewee's Position with Network
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)	3½	800	200,000	0.40	Blue collar families	Peg Johnston/Laurie Ryan	Founder/Administrator
	FREE LE (VA)	5	100	50,000	0.20	50% Students, 50% Community	Glenn Armen	Administrator
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)	5	1,000	80,000	1.25	Pluralistic	Phil Newton	Administrator
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)	6½	30,000	7,000,000	0.43	Pluralistic	Diane Ainism	Administrator
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)	1½	800	250,000	0.32	Pluralistic	Bernidine Findley	Co-founder
	LINK (IA)	5	1,000	60,000	1.66	Pluralistic	Jeff wein/Rosie Campbell	Founder/Administrator
	LE NETWORK (RI)	2	800	6,200	12.90	95% College students, 5% Community	Ed Cornett	Administrator
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)	2	1,500	2,000,000	0.07	Pluralistic	James Quina	Founder
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)	3	900	140,000	0.64	Library patrons	Roberta Carpenter	Library Staffperson
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)	½	0	650,000	0.00	No data	Nancy Pope	Founder
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)	½	100	300,000	0.03	Pluralistic	John Mackey	Founder
	TRADE-OFF (PA)	½	400	200,000	0.02	Pluralistic	Shelia Burtchby	Founder
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)	1	350	500,000	0.07	High school, young adults	Michael Moore	Co-founder
	PARALLEL (MI)	1	300	20,000	1.50	College students	Teachout/Rogers/Gorosh	Founder/Administrators
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)	½	25	200,000	0.13	Library patrons	Judy Forester	Administrator
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)	½	600	1,000,000	0.06	Pluralistic	Robert Juliano	Founder
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)	½	400	500,000	0.08	Pluralistic	Terry Peters/Maggie Hilligoss	Co-founders
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)	½	30	300,000	0.01	No data	Jean Lietz	Co-founder
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)	1	75	500,000	0.01	Pluralistic	Lawrence Reyka	Founder
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)	2½	150	36,000	0.41	Library patrons	Susan Kheel	Founder
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)	6	300	70,000	0.42	Pluralistic	Marilee Shore	Administrator
	FREE LE (IN)	3	400	1,000,000	0.04	No data	Steve Bett	Co-founder
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)	3/4	250	1,000,000	0.03	No data	Glenn Seatcher	Founder
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)	3/4	100	700,000	0.01	No data	Tim Gliges	Administrator
	FREE LE (NY)	3½	200	8,000,000	0.01	No data	Paul Knatz	Founder
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)	1	4,000	7,000,000	0.05	Pluralistic	Nancy Jacobs	Co-founder
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MO)	6	no data	2,000,000		No data	Mary Lehmann	Co-founder
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)	½	75	1,500	5.0	Middle class (retired)	Kit Samuals	Co-founder

for all inactive models. The major reason for the disparity between the two figures (2.5 years vs. 1 year or less) is probably that the founders and administrators of the unexamined inactive models tend to be more mobile and make more frequent job changes (thus, more difficult to locate) than the founders and administrators of the inactive models examined by this study. If this is true, it would suggest that in order to make a learning network successful, a sincere, long-term commitment on the part of its founders is important. Unfortunately, it appears that many of the founders of the unexamined inactive programs were college-age people who had countercultural orientations and who were reluctant to make the long-term time commitment that was needed. Many probably expected "instant success" and when that was not forthcoming, they decided to move on to something different.

On the basis of the data, it is fairly obvious that the learning network movement in the United States is not presently a "booming" enterprise. The total number of participants in the eighteen active networks is approximately 40,000. The 30,000 people involved in only one program (The Learning Exchange of Evanston) accounts for 75% of the total number. And even in this program the 30,000 network participants account for less than .5% of the total population of its service area.[1]

The network with the highest participation percentage (12.9%) is the LE Network, located on the campus of Brown University in

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[1]However, it should be noted for the purposes of comparison that few non-compulsory educational programs attract more than 1% of their city's population, e.g., Northwestern University's 14,000 students represent .2% of metropolitan Chicago's population.

Providence, Rhode Island. The second highest is the Human Resource Center with 5%. The Human Resource Center (now inactive) was located on an island with 1,500 residents adjacent to St. Petersburg Beach, Florida. The remainder of the networks had participation percentages no higher than 1.66% of the total population in the defined service area.

Of the eighteen active models only three are located in cities with a population of more than 1,000,000. Most have been set up in cities and towns having populations between 100,000 and 500,000.

In regard to demographic information, very few of the learning networks were able to provide any concrete data about the age, race, educational background, and socioeconomic level of their clientele. As a matter of policy, none of the networks require that clients divulge such information in order to use the service. This practice, on one hand, reflects that operators of networks have a high regard for the privacy of their clientele; but on the other hand, it suggests an unsophisticated attitude toward the market research necessary for an effective communication program (as was discussed in Chapter III).

In spite of the lack of demographic data, some of the interviewees were able to make a few generalizations about their clientele on the basis of informal data (conversations on the telephone, parts of the city in which their clients reside, etc.). Based on the informal data, it would appear that the model appeals generally to a pluralistic population (people from a wide variety of age groups, races, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels) but especially to people between the ages of 20-35 and people who have had some postsecondary education.

As was expected, those networks established within an institutional setting appeal heavily to the market of the sponsoring institution. For example, the Free LE at the University of Virginia, the LE Network at Brown University, and Parallel at Kalamazoo College/Western Michigan University primarily serve college students; and the Tallahassee LE and Lansing Area LE primarily serve library patrons. So, it may be concluded that when a learning network becomes affiliated with an institution it tends to serve as a secondary service for the existing market.

Legal Status

An examination of Table D on page 87, reveals that twelve of the eighteen active learning networks are independent community-based organizations, while six are affiliated with sponsoring institutions (a 2:1 ratio). In the inactive category there are five independent and five affiliated networks (a 1:1 ratio). The data on Table D seems to suggest that independent organizations tend to have a higher survival rate. To some degree, this notion is further substantiated when the entire group of thirty-four inactive networks is examined (see page 59); twenty-one were independent and thirteen were affiliated (a ratio of 1.6:1). Some possible reasons for this phenomenon will be discussed in the Funding section of this chapter.

Of the eighteen active models, all but three are either incorporated as not-for-profit organizations or are affiliated with sponsoring institutions that are not-for-profit. The three remaining models indicate that their incorporation applications are either being prepared or have already been submitted to the respective state agencies.

TABLE D -- LEGAL STATUS

	ITEM / LEARNING NETWORK	Affiliation	Independent	Not-for-profit	Tax Exempt	Unincorporated	Profit
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)		X	X	X		
	FREE LE (VA)	University of Virginia					
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)		X	X	X		
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)		X	X	X		
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)		X	X	X		
	LINK (IA)		X	X	in process		
	LE NETWORK (RI)	Brown University					
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)		X	X	X		
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)	Leon County Public Library					
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)		X			X	
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)		X	X	in process		
	TRADE-OFF (PA)		X			X	
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)	Hot Line					
	PARALLEL (MI)	Kalamazoo College/Western Michigan Univ.					
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)	Lansing Public Library					
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)		X	X	X		
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)		X	X			
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)		X			X	
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)	Humanist Church					
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)	East Brunswick Public Library					
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)	College of Dupage County					
	FREE LE (IN)		X	X			
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)		X			X	
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)	Minneapolis Public Schools					
	FREE LE (NY)		X	X	X		
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)		X	X	X		
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MO)		X	X	X		
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)	Vina Del Mar Association					

It appears that all learning networks realize the importance of becoming a legal entity, as was discussed in Chapter III.

All of the independent operational networks have obtained an IRS tax-exempt status with the exception of LINK. (Again, it appears that learning networks realize the importance of having a tax-exempt status in order to raise external funds.) Even though LINK has been in existence for five years, until recently it was affiliated with a University of Iowa student program. After deciding to become independent, LINK received its not-for-profit incorporation papers and then applied for a tax-exempt status. IRS denied LINK's request because of some confusion regarding the stated purpose of the organization. LINK failed to indicate on the application form that its primary purpose was "educational." Jack Pierce, the director of LINK, is in the process of appealing IRS's decision. In view of the legal precedents that have already been set by other tax-exempt networks, it is anticipated that LINK's appeal will be successful.

It is interesting to note that none of the learning networks in the study were established on a profit-making basis. There is, however, a for-profit organization named OmniQuest, Inc. in Chappaqua, New York that did have a semi-learning network orientation during its initial months of operation. The business was started by Vicki Mechner who wanted to locate not only teachers for learners and learners for teachers, but also find part-time employment for people, clients for consultants, consultants for clients, as well as hard-to-find goods and services for people who needed them. At first, Mrs. Mechner charged an annual subscription fee of $20 for individuals and $30 for

families. However the subscription fees did not generate sufficient funds to cover expenses. According to Mrs. Mechner, the average man-on-the-street somehow believes that information is and should be free. He thinks that it doesn't cost anyone anything to provide it. Because of her experience with this phenomenon, Mrs. Mechner (and her colleague, Dorothy Goldman), decided to change the focus of their service by appealing to business-people rather than lay-people. OmniQuest, Inc. now specializes in "finding the hard-to-find." They have, for example, found

> . . . a cast of five for a Westchester County film-strip producer who had been unable to get credible characters from several NYC casting sources. A town to be used as the shooting location for a major TV production, complete with courthouse, hospital, barber-shop, and cliff-top mansion, all in authentic 1920's style. Envelopes to fit a firm's off-shaped African Christmas cards. An expert in the field of three-dimensional animal maze learning for a patent law firm. Copies of out-of-print contour maps for the head of a recreational vehicles company.[2]

In spite of the new focus, OmniQuest, Inc. has not yet been able to generate a profit. This however is subject to change, as the business has more time to grow, becomes better known, and is utilized more by the business community.

Philosophy

Based on the interviewees response to the question, "Why was _____ established?" and other comments made during the course of the interviews, a few evolutionary patterns became readily apparent. As indicated on Table E (see page 90), nine of the active models were

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[2]Vicki Mechner, "Finding The Hard To Find", The Business Journals, (September 27, 1977), p. 17.

TABLE E -- PHILOSOPHY

LEARNING NETWORK	ITEM	Revolutionary/Activist	Community Service	Supplementary Educational Service	Other
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)	X		X	
	FREE LE (VA)				
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)	X			
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)	X			
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)		X		
	LINK (IA)	X		X	
	LE NETWORK (RI)				
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)	X			
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)		X		
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)		X		
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)	X		X	
	TRADE-OFF (PA)				Preventative action
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)				
	PARALLEL (MI)	X			
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)		X	X	
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)				
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)	X		X	
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)				
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)		X		
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)		X		
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)		X		
	FREE LE (IN)	X		X	
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)			X	
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)				
	FREE LE (NY)	X		X	
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)				
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MO)	X			
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)		X		

started with a revolutionary/activist motivation (at least in regard to educational philosophy). The founders of these nine programs had either attended the CIDOC seminars, were familiar with the writings of Illich and Reimer and endorsed their educational philosopny, or read about an operational model and recognized the revolutionary potential of deinstitutionalizing and deprofessionalizing education. Of the other nine active programs, those affiliated with an educational institution tended to start their programs for the purpose of providing an educational supplement for students (especially the Free LE at the University of Virginia and the LE Network at Brown University), and those affiliated with libraries tended to start their programs to expand their range of community services.

Perhaps the most unusual reason for starting a learning network was presented by the Front Free School in Burton, Michigan. The program is affiliated with Hot-Line, an alternative community organization that has a youth crisis line, free pregnancy tests, birth control, V.D. clinic, etc. Michael Moore, a co-founder of the Front Free School, said, "We were bored and were looking for something to do. We were getting tired of dealing only with crisis--we wanted to start doing some preventing--and the Front Free School seemed to be a logical choice." In essence, Mr. Moore was responding to some of the issues that were discussed in Chapter I, viz., the alienation and dissatisfaction of young people.

During the early years of learning network development the data indicate that most of the independent programs had an activist motivation for starting the service (five out of six in the operational

category). Of the six independent incipient programs started during the past year, more than half had never heard of Ivan Illich or Everett Reimer. This suggests that the reasons for starting a learning network may be becoming less radical. At the root of this philosophical shift is probably the kind of exposure The Learning Exchange of Evanston has received through the national media, e.g., articles in Time, The Wall Street Journal, The Christian Science Monitor, etc. Readers of such publications who desire to start a network for their community are "turned on" more by the logic of the concept than by the philosophy underlying the concept's early development.

It should be kept in mind that the data on Table E do not provide a complete picture of the motivations of founders--they represent only the primary motivation at the start of their programs. Virtually, all the models have some secondary motivations and, of course, some of the motivations may change as the programs develop. The Learning Exchange of Evanston, for example, has emphasized various parts of its philosophy at different stages of its development. In the early days, representatives of the organization articulated a fairly radical viewpoint through promotional materials, media interviews, and a regular radio program. Eventually it was determined that such a viewpoint was turning away more people than it was attracting. As a result, the emphasis was consciously changed in order to present an image more in line with the prevailing mood of the community, especially to the people who had the ability to provide financial support for the program and thus enable its continuing operation. At present, The Learning Exchange projects itself as a somewhat middle-of-the-road educational and

community service. In essence, The Learning Exchange has come to view the process as the revolutionary component of the program, not what is articulated about the program or its philosophy. The educational revolution will have arrived when a substantial portion of a community's population is involved in the "process" of teaching, learning, and sharing similar interests with each other instead of relying on the process of schooling to meet their educational needs. Whether or not such a revolutionary process can be achieved on a large scale still is an open question.

Funding

Generally organizations that have insufficient funds are not likely to succeed. Unfortunately, learning networks are, and always have been, in a precarious financial position. Of the eighteen active models, the average amount of funds available to start the programs has been under $500 (see Table F on page 94). Six started with $100 or less. And most were started with or were supplemented by loans and donations from the founders. Except for the LE Network at Brown University ($750) and the Front Free School in Michigan ($1,000), none of the affiliated programs received significant support from their sponsoring institutions.

Two of the inactive affiliated models did however receive an initial show of support from their sponsoring institutions: the Human Resource Exchange at the College of DuPage ($8,000) and the Learning Network with the Minneapolis Public Schools ($4,500). These funds were allocated to pay a staff person to coordinate the respective programs. Both services became inactive after budget cuts within the

TABLE F -- FUNDING

	LEARNING NETWORK / ITEM	Initial Capital	Source	Maintenance Capital			
				Amount		Source	
				Needed	Available	Internal	External
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)	$ 250	Founder	$ 15,000	$ 10,000	19	81*
	FREE LE (VA)	50	Student activity program	No response	50	0	100
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)	125	Founders	32,500	22,000	10	90
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)	25	Student dormitory	250,000	152,000	39	61
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)	1,500	Corporate & church contributions	13,750	10,000	2	98
	LINK (IA)	100	Student activity program	24,000	7,500	7	93
	LE NETWORK (RI)	750	Student activity program	12,000	750	0	100
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)	2,000	Founder	50,000	10,000	10	90
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)	0		0	0		
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)	325	Founder	10,000	0	0	100
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)	1,000	Founder	10,000	1,000	10	90
	TRADE-OFF (PA)	400	Founder	10,000	110	10	90
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)	1,000	Community agency	10,000	10,000	100	0
	PARALLEL (MI)	10	Student activity program	1,500	600	0	100
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)	0		10,000	0	0	0
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)	1,200	Founder	15,000	4,000	32	68
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)	125	Founder	8,000	250	0	100
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)	150	Founder	60,000	0	0	100
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)	0		15,000	100	0	100
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)	50	Library	10,000	0	0	100
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)	8,000	College	15,000	0	0	100
	FREE LE (IN)	2,500	Church	10,000	0	0	100
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)	100	Founder	1,000	200	0	100
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)	4,500	Public school	5,000	0	0	100
	FREE LE (NY)	0		150,000	1,500	5	95
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)	500	Founder	40,000	1,800	27	73
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MO)	0		No comment	1,200	0	100
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)	0		10,000	0	0	0

sponsoring institutions necessitated the elimination of these "low priority" programs.

In regard to maintenance capital, very few of the active models have an adequate budget. If the $152,000 of The Learning Exchange is factored out of the data on Table F, an average annual amount of $4,487 is available to maintain and improve the services of the other seventeen active models. In view of this economic reality, most learning networks do not have the funds to conduct market research, develop comprehensive communication programs, attract competent staff people, upgrade information systems, conduct evaluation programs, etc.

In response to the question concerning optimum operating funds, the data indicate that the average amount needed to provide the ideal service is just over $15,000 (again, factoring out The Learning Exchange's response). In view of the many elements involved in operating a successful program, it seems that interviewees would have placed the optimum budget at a higher level. Either they intend to find a way to provide a quality service at an extremely low cost or most of them do not have a clear idea of the meaning of an optimum budget. Chances are, the latter is the case; and, if so, it unfortunately reflects the level of fiscal sophistication involved in the learning network movement at the present time.

Perhaps the most perilous aspect of the learning network movement is its dependence on external support. An examination of the data indicates that, on the average, only 12% of the independent active models' income is obtained through internal sources (i.e., client memberships, institutional memberships, sale of promotional items, etc.). Peg

Johnston, the founder of the Binghamton Learning Exchange, stated during the interview that, "It seems as if we, and most of the other people I know in the movement, have a 'money hang-up.' We're just very reluctant to ask our people (network participants) for money." The adage among fund raisers that "you don't get money unless you ask for it," seems to hold true for many learning networks. On one hand this reluctance to ask for funds reflects an adverse attitude toward "begging" (which is what fund raising is when stripped of its rhetoric), and on the other hand it suggests an anti-capitalistic orientation on the part of many learning network organizers. Whichever the case, the end result is usually the same--no funds. Consequently, programs that can enable community residents to take charge of their own education do not get developed or are grossly underdeveloped.

However, there are two independent programs that are making some progress in raising funds from clients. As indicated on page 18, the internal income of The Learning Exchange in Evanston covers approximately two-thirds of its core operating budget (the "39%" indicated on Table F is lower than "two-thirds" because the one-time expense of two special projects of The Learning Exchange--computerization and national technical assistance--have been factored into the total operating budget, thus reducing the internal income percentage). The major element of The Learning Exchange's self-support initiative is the client membership program which is, to some degree, based on the capitalistic concept of fee-for-service. It is supplemented by other income-generating activities, e.g., a library membership program, introductory workshop fees from people around the country who want to establish a learning

network in their community, the sale of promotional items like T-shirts and tote bags, gift memberships, and speech honoraria. The Learning Exchange has no "money hang-up."

Another network that is making significant progress in generating internal income is the Community LE in Rhode Island. Bob Juliano, the founder of this incipient program, indicates that 32% of his operating budget is covered by self-support activities. He has a membership program that accounts for one-third of his organization's internal income. The other two-thirds come from a unique workshop program he recently instituted. Mr. Juliano determines in which subjects his clients express the most interest; he then locates a teacher for the subjects, arranges a time and place for a workshop, charges the learners $25 for six weekly sessions, and splits the profits with the teacher. In view of the program's initial success (over $1,000 was raised during the first few months), Mr. Juliano intends to expand the program as a way to generate additional income for his organization. The Community LE also has no "money hang-up."

Of the six affiliated active models, two have no budget at all (Tallahassee LE and Lansing Area LE); three are supported by the sponsoring institution through student activities programs (Free LE, LE Network, and Parallel); and one is 100% self-supporting (Front Free School).

As indicated earlier, the Front Free School had received $1,000 from Hot-Line to start the program. During the first six months of operation the co-founders conducted a series of Bingos which generated more than $8,000. These activities provided the organization with

sufficient funds to hire two full-time people at the minimum wage. However, it should be pointed out, that while the Front Free School has creatively found a way to generate income, the funds they receive are not the direct result of the educational services they provide. The lack of an accountability link in this regard may, in the long run, not provide much incentive for improving the quality of the service to community residents.

In regard to the inactive programs, only the Knowledge Exchange in Santa Monica, California developed an organized and systematic program to raise funds from clients. Each person that received contact information was asked to donate $2.50 to the organization if his/her match was successful. Income from the program covered 27% of the operating budget; but the amount was insufficient to sustain the program.

In terms of external funding for maintenance purposes, the condition of learning networks in general is bleak. While The Learning Exchange's grants and contributions from foundations and corporations provide some supplemental support for the organization, it is not a sufficient amount to realize the model's full potential. As indicated on Table F, The Learning Exchange projects that to develop the program adequately, an additional $100,000 is needed. Even though The Learning Exchange is still short of necessary funding, it is faring much better than all the other active networks.

Another program that has had some success in raising external funds is the DeKalb Exchange. Not coincidentally, the DeKalb Exchange has been in operation the second longest of all the operational models. It may be that the longer a learning network is in operation, the better

are its chances of raising funds from external sources. More time in operation would provide staff with increased time to develop corporate and foundation contacts, improve proposal writing skills, etc. The DeKalb Exchange, in addition to generating support from some foundations and corporations, was able to obtain federal revenue sharing funds from its municipal government for a two-year period. Based on all available data, the DeKalb Exchange is the only network that has received such support. Most, if not all, of the other organizations have not applied for such funds--perhaps because many cities use these funds only for capital and maintenance purposes.

For quite a few of the active networks, the federal government's Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)[3] has been crucial to their survival. Five of the six independent active programs have relied on CETA grants to employ one or more staff members. So far the only exception in this category has been The Learning Community in Southfield, Michigan.

In general it can be concluded that one of the reasons for the high failure rate of learning networks and the poor performance of some of the models (at least in terms of number of people served) can be directly attributed to the organizations' lack of capital and the reluctance or inability of the staff to obtain the resources necessary for establishing, maintaining, and improving viable programs.

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[3]CETA is a federal program that subsidizes the private sector to train and hire unemployed or underemployed people so that they can be brought up to a higher level of economic participation.

Organization of Information

The data on Table G (see page 101) indicate that all but two of the learning networks in the study use (or used) a filing system of index cards for information input, storage, and retrieval (the two exceptions are the Learning Resource Exchange in St. Louis and the Front Free School). Almost all the models have two basic files: 1) a master file containing cards with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of each person in the network; and 2) a topic file containing cards for each topic registered by each participant. Included on the topic card are the name, phone number, and special topic requirements of the network participant. Most of the networks usually divide the topic file into three separate sections--a teacher file, a learner file, and an interest match file.

The Learning Resource Exchange, when it was in operation, used a McBee filing system. The cards were sorted by long needles passed through coded holes punched along the periphery of each card. The Front Free School uses index cards, but instead of storing the cards in file drawers, they are placed on two massive bulletin boards in Hot Line's office.

For the most part, interviewees indicate that the information systems they use are adequate to serve network participants. They feel that the major advantage is that the systems are inexpensive to maintain and simple to use. While this may be true, it is possible that more effective information storage and retrieval systems can and should be used, especially in view of the many operations involved in providing a quality service (e.g., file updating, cross referencing,

TABLE G -- ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION

	LEARNING NETWORK \ ITEM	Computer			File Cards	Other	Update Systems	Active Feedback Systems
		On-line	Batch	Microfiche				
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)				X		X	
	FREE LE (VA)				X			
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)				X	Notebook	X	
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)			in process	X			X
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)				X		X	
	LINK (IA)				X		X	
	LE NETWORK (RI)				X			
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)				X	Teachers resumes		
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)				X			
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)				X			
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)				X			
	TRADE-OFF (PA)				X			
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)					Bulletin board		
	PARALLEL (MI)				X	Notebook		
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)				X			
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)				X			X
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)				X	Notebook		
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)				X			
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)				X	Notebook	X	X
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)				X		X	
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)				X	Teachers resumes		X
	FREE LE (IN)				X			X
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)				X			
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)				X			
	FREE LE (NY)				X			
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)				X			
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MD)					McBee system		
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)				X			

systematic mailings, and market research. Moreover, when the size of a network's clientele passes a certain point, the index card system becomes cumbersome and inefficient. The Learning Exchange in Evanston is presently facing this problem. More than 70,000 cards are needed to serve 30,000 participants. Fortunately, The Learning Exchange has been able to secure a federal grant to convert from a manual filing system to a time-share computerized system. The data retrieval aspect will employ microfiche cards and microfiche readers. So far, all the programs and systems have been designed and the hardware has been purchased. The Learning Exchange is now in the process of key-entering the hard copy (index card information) onto the computer's data base. The program is expected to be operational sometime this year. After the computerization program is completed, tested, and operational, The Learning Exchange will be able to assist other groups in the development and implementation of similar data processing systems when and if the need arises.

More so than any other learning network, the Front Free School is and will continue to be faced with the problems of an expanding data base. Chances are, their bulletin board approach will have to be converted to a file drawer system in order to expedite the locating of information needed to serve participants.

As indicated on Table G, some of the networks have supplementary information systems. The DeKalb Exchange, Parallel in Kalamazoo, and the Community LE in Syracuse use a notebook in which to record all transactions between clients and the network office. In essence, the notebook serves as a back-up for the file card information system and

is used to keep statistics on the day-to-day operations.

The Learning Community in Southfield also has a supplementary file in which are kept resumes of many of their teachers. If learners want to find out more about teachers' backgrounds before making contact, this information can be obtained through the network office. When the Human Resource Exchange in Glen Ellyn was in operation it had a similar system.

Two major problems facing all learning networks are: 1) the updating of the data base; and 2) the obtaining of feedback from clients. From an operational standpoint, both processes are closely related. A systematic feedback program (i.e., contacting clients a short time after they had received contact information to make sure that their needs were met and that the information they received was up-to-date) can be very helpful in updating the files.

The data indicate that very few of the models have implemented a systematic feedback program. The reason for the failure to implement feedback programs is that the cost is prohibitive. Even The Learning Exchange's active feedback program has been sporadic during the past few years. When funds were available to pay staff members to call network participants two or three weeks after receiving contact information, the feedback program was very helpful not only in updating the files but also in providing additional contacts for clients if their needs were not met. But the cost of recontacting all the people who received information was too much of a drain on The Learning Exchange's limited funds. At the time of this writing, The Learning Exchange is experimenting with a mail-in feedback system (i.e., after clients

receive contact information over the telephone, The Learning Exchange sends them a feedback form in the mail and request that they fill it out and mail it back). Bob Juliano, at the Community LE in North Providence, has started using a similar procedure. He uses the feedback mailing also as an opportunity to solicit for contributions. If enough contributions result from the process, his feedback program could feasibly pay for itself. The data also indicate that four of the operational programs have a systematic updating program. The Binghamton LE, DeKalb Exchange, Fort Wayne LE, and LINK strive to telephone all the people in their files at least once a year to make sure their listings are up-to-date. Since none of the four networks has more than 1,000 participants, the execution of this program is not an overwhelming task and its accomplishment probably has a significant impact on the quality of their services.

Communication Programs

An examination of Table H on page 105 indicates that most learning networks have used a variety of communication techniques and media to inform the public about their service. The most heavily used media have been radio PSA's, newspaper articles, posters, distribution of catalogs/newsletters, public speaking, and radio interviews. Except for the printing of the catalogs/newsletters, all of these items are relatively inexpensive.

In response to the interview question relating to the most effective means of publicity,[4] four of the operational models indicated

[4]The most effective means of publicity for each model is indicated on Table H by an enclosed parenthesis.

TABLE H -- COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS

	LEARNING NETWORK / ITEM	Radio			Television			Newspaper				Local Distribution			Interfaces			Lrng. Fair	Public Spkg.	Other
		PSA	Inter-view	Regular Program	PSA	Inter-view	Regular Program	PSA	Article	Press Release	Regular Program	Poster	Take-one	Catalog/ Newslet.	School	Library	Business			
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)	X	X		X	X			X			X	X	(X)				X	X	Agency referrals
	FREE LE (VA)	X	X					(X)	X	X				X				X		
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)	X	X	X		X			X			X	X	(X)	X			X	X	
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)	X	X	X	X	(X)		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)	X	X			X			X				X	(X)				X	X	
	LINK (IA)	X	X			X			X		X	X	X	(X)				X	X	
	LE NETWORK (RI)	X							X			X		X					X	(Door-to-door)
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)	(X)	X	X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X				X	
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)	X				X				X		X			(X)					
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)							X				X	X							Want-Ad
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)	X	X									X								(Door-to-door)
	TRADE-OFF (PA)	X	X		X	X				X		X	(X)	X						Agency referral
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)	(X)	X		X				X	X		X	X	X		X			X	
	PARALLEL (MI)	X						X		X				X	X			X	X	(Info. table)
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)								X	X		(X)				X			X	
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)	X	(X)		X	X		X	X			X		X	X				X	
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)	X	X							X		X	X	X		X			X	
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)								X	X		X		X						(Free U Catalog)
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)	X	X						X			X		X			X			(Info. table)
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)							X	X	X		X	X	X	(X)	X			X	
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)		X						(X)	X				X					X	Exhibits
	FREE LE (IN)	X	X		X	X			X	X		X	X	X					X	
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)	X						(X)	X				X			X			X	
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)	X						X	X	X		X	X							
	FREE LE (NY)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	(X)					X	
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)	X	X	X		(X)		X	X	X		X		X	X	X			X	
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MD)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X						X			X	
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)								X					X					X	(Door-to-door)

that the local distribution of their periodic catalogs/newsletters through small businesses, libraries, newsstands, etc. attracts the most people to their service; three organizations indicated that a door-to-door technique worked best; and the remainder of the responses were widely scattered among the various media. The most effective means of publicity for The Learning Exchange of Evanston has been television interviews followed by television PSA's, radio PSA's, and newspaper articles.

Based on interactions with founders and administrators of learning networks, the following generalizations can be made: regular radio programs are not worth the time and effort unless the listenership of the station is large (most public service radio shows are aired either very late at night or early in the morning); television PSA's are not likely to be aired unless they are of good quality (videotaped with sound is best); newspaper articles may not attract many network participants but reproductions of the articles can be helpful when raising funds, speaking to community groups, etc. (exposure in the newspaper helps to establish an organization's legitimacy); posters help to keep an organization's name in front of the public but they do not seem to be very effective in attracting people to the program (five interviewees indicated that posters were their least effective means of publicity); the free distributions of catalogs/newsletters, while attracting many new participants, may defeat an organization's effort to generate internal income (The Learning Exchange's experience with the membership program suggests that people might be willing to pay for such materials); the development of interfaces with schools, libraries, and businesses

provide a useful way to distribute promotional materials to a wide range of people (The Learning Exchange's library membership program is an example of how this can be done); learning fairs, while providing an opportunity for a network's teachers to publicly demonstrate their skills and expertise, do not seem to be worth the time and effort involved in planning and coordinating the fairs (most of the five operational models that sponsored learning fairs expressed such a viewpoint); the distribution of learning network flyers under the windshield wipers of cars, while possibly irritating some people, seems to be an effective way to capture people's attention and acquaint them with network services (Shelia Burtchby, at Trade-Off, used this technique and was able to get approximately forty people to make contact with the organization for every one thousand leaflets she distributed--and she received no negative response); information tables within an institutionally-affiliated program seems to be effective (Parallel in Kalamazoo and LE Network at Brown University use this technique during student registration--it also can be adapted by some independent programs as well).

Even though learning networks have many communication channels open to them and network staff have devised many creative ways to inform the public about their service, at the time of this writing not one organization has conducted a comprehensive market research study to determine the best message to use in attracting likely participants to the network. Because of this, most, if not all, of the messages used by networks tend to be amateurish and lack a coordinated, concentrated focus. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are only 40,000

people in the network movement.

However, even if a comprehensive market research project were conducted, it probably would have only a minimal effect on the communication problems facing learning networks. While learning networks have access to some free and inexpensive publicity outlets, the launching of comprehensive communication programs requires the design, development, and testing of a variety of different types of promotional materials. Few, if any, learning networks, at the present time, have the funds required to develop the necessary materials (videotaped PSA's, attractive brochures, professionally-designed displays, etc.).

Client Access

In terms of client access, the data on Table I (see page 109) indicate that only three of the active models have any access requirements for clients. As stated earlier, The Learning Exchange of Evanston mails membership/registration applications to all first-time callers. Before they can list a topic or have access to contact information in the data base, first-time callers must return the completed application form. Mailing the application to the address provided by the first-time callers serves as a modest security step since it verifies that the caller receives mail at the address he/she indicated. Moreover, the registration application provides The Learning Exchange with the opportunity to solicit financial support from first-time callers prior to their using the service. And based on the program's success in generating income from network participants, such a policy seems to be worthwhile if considered only from a financial standpoint.

TABLE I -- CLIENT ACCESS

	LEARNING NETWORK \ ITEM	Access Requirements			Type of Access		
		None	Registration	Fee	In-Person	Telephone	Mail
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)	X				X	
	FREE LE (VA)	X				X	
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)	X				X	
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)		X			X	
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)	X				X	
	LINK (IA)	X				X	
	LE NETWORK (RI)	X			X		
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)	X				X	
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)	X			X		
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)		X			X	
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)	X				X	
	TRADE-OFF (PA)		X			X	
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)	X			X		
	PARALLEL (MI)	X				X	
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)	X			X		
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)	X				X	
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)	X				X	
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)	X				X	
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)	X				X	
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)	X			X		
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)	X				X	
	FREE LE (IN)	X				X	
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)	X				X	
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)	X				X	
	FREE LE (NY)	X					X
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)	X				X	
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MO)	X				X	
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)	X				X	

Trade-Off in Bethleham and STM Exchange in Indiana use a similar membership/registration procedure for first-time callers; but since both of the programs have been in operation just a few months, no conclusions can be drawn at the present time.

The other fifteen active programs and all ten of the inactive programs indicate they have no access requirements for clients. While such a process facilitates the spontaneous serving of first-time callers, it also appears to decrease the chances of the organization's receiving financial support from clients. Clients may feel that if they do not have to invest something to participate in the program either in terms of time or money, then the contact information they receive must not be worth very much. If such an attitude prevails, very few networks that have no access requirements can expect to generate much support from their users. Therefore, the establishment of an "it's for free" mentality, probably has contributed substantially to the demise of many inactive learning networks; and, if continued, could jeopardize the existence of many that are now in operation.

In regard to type of access, the data indicate that fourteen of the eighteen active networks are mainly telephone-based, i.e., clients call the network office, receive names and phone numbers of other network participants who have registered similar or complementary interests, and then call the people who seem appropriate. The other four active models have an in-person type of access, i.e., clients usually visit the network office in-person to register or obtain the contact information they need. The four organizations which use the in-person type of access are all affiliated models: two libraries

(Tallahassee LE and Lansing Area LE); one university (LE Network in Providence); and one community agency (Front Free School in Michigan). Because of their institutional affiliation and their central location within the sponsoring agency, the in-person type of access is well suited for their purposes. The other two institutionally-affiliated programs (Parallel in Kalamazoo and FLEX in Charlottesville) both have an in-person access component; but for the most part, they provide their services over the telephone. Both of these organizations are presently striving to expand their services into the community. Consequently, a telephone form of access seems to be the most desirable means to achieve their outreach goals.

As discussed in Chapter III, the data indicate that the telephone type of access is the most preferred from both the standpoint of the providers of the network service and also the recipients of the service. It is easily accessible, relatively inexpensive, and provides for spontaneous two-way communication. However, in-person access seems to be the most practical form in some institutional settings, especially when there is no concerted effort planned to attract a market different from that of the sponsoring institution. In-person access also has the added benefit of personal face-to-face communication. The postal form of access is rarely, if ever, used --probably because it is time-consuming both from the viewpoints of the provider and the user and it lacks the spontaneous interactional component that seems to be useful when network staff attempt to provide the best contacts possible in meeting clients' self-defined needs.

Management and Administration

As Table J on page 113 indicates, all six of the independent operational models have boards of directors who establish general policy for their respective organizations. The size of the boards range from five to fifteen people. Based on comments made by interviewees about the selection and composition of their boards, it seems that, for the most part, board members are chosen on the basis of their enthusiasm for the learning network concept and their willingness to help work to develop the program. Except for The Learning Community in Detroit and The Learning Exchange in Evanston none of the other independent operational models expressed a desire to attract "well-connected" business or community leaders to their board. To some degree this phenomenon may stem from a concern about "loss of control to powerful individuals" or possibly "giving in to the establishment." Whatever the reason, the lack of high-powered and experienced people on the board of directors probably accounts in large part for the inability of many learning networks to raise a substantial amount of external income through corporate and foundation sources. Since many funders tend to give contributions and grants primarily to those organizations with which they have some personal contact (usually on the board level), learning networks that have few if any influential board members can expect to remain low on funders' priority lists. Moreover, an organization with a board that has no one with expertise and experience in the business community is likely to have some difficulty in establishing a successful client income program.

TABLE J -- MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

	LEARNING NETWORK / ITEM	Directors	Advisors	Staff			Decision Making		Documentation			
				Full-time	Part-time	Volunteer	Policy	Operations	Job Description	Organizational Chart	Planning	Training Systems
OPERATIONAL	BINGHAMTON LE (NY)	10		1			Board of directors	Staff	X		X	X
	FREE LE (VA)					3	Staff	Staff	X	X		
	DEKALB EXCHANGE (IL)	15	13	1	3	26	Board of directors	Staff	X		X	X
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (IL)	6	20	5	15	3	Board of directors	Staff	X	X	X	X
	FORT WAYNE LE (IN)	10				30	Board of directors	Board of directors	X	X		X
	LINK (IA)	9	7	2	2		Board of directors	Staff	X		X	X
	LE NETWORK (RI)				1	4	Staff	Staff				
	LEARNING COMMUNITY (MI)	5	16			21	Board of directors	Board of directors	X	X	X	X
	TALLAHASSEE LE (FL)						Library staff	Library staff				
INCIPIENT	STM EXCHANGE (IN)				1	3	Staff	Staff				
	LEARNING NETWORK (TX)	5				10	Working board	Working board	X		X	
	TRADE-OFF (PA)	16				4	Board of directors	Director	X		X	X
	FRONT FREE SCHOOL (MI)	3		2		15	Working board	Working board				
	PARALLEL (MI)				2	30	Staff	Staff	X	X		X
	LANSING AREA LE (MI)				1		Supervisor	Staff		X		
	COMMUNITY LE (RI)	5			4		Board of directors	Director	X	X	X	X
	FULL CIRCLE RESOURCE EX (IL)					20	Staff	Staff				
	COMMUNITY LE (NY)		5			8	Staff	Staff			X	
INACTIVE	COMMUNITY LE (OH)					1	Staff	Staff				
	LEARNING EXCHANGE (NJ)				1		Staff	Staff		X		
	HUMAN RESOURCE EX (IL)			1			Supervisors	Staff	X	X	X	X
	FREE LE (IN)	10			1	3	Staff	Staff				
	PUTNAM WESTCHESTER LE (NY)					5	Staff	Staff				
	LEARNING NETWORK (MN)		12	1			Supervisor	Staff	X			
	FREE LE (NY)	11				30	Board of directors	Staff		X	X	X
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (CA)	3			2	15	Working board	Working board				
	LEARNING RESOURCE EX (MO)	6				3	Board of directors	Staff			X	
	HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER (FL)					15	Staff	Staff			X	

Of the incipient programs, Bob Juliano, of the Community LE in Providence, seems to be taking the necessary steps for developing a strong board. Besides himself (he has a background in education), his board includes an attorney, the presidents of two companies, and a professional musician. More so than most of the administrators interviewed for this study, Mr. Juliano recognizes that in order to make a learning network survive, it is necessary for it to be run like a successful business with all the appropriate parts, disciplines, and procedures. To help bring that about he has sought after those people who have a thorough understanding of business principles.

In regard to the inactive independent networks, four out of five had a board of directors. But none of them seemed to attract the type of people necessary for establishing a strong, fundable program. They failed to do so probably for some of the same reasons mentioned above.

The data indicate that a network affiliated with a sponsoring institution customarily does not form a board of directors. It appears that the sponsoring institutions (and their boards) are legally responsible for the networks and the "connections" of the sponsoring institution is or should be instrumental in establishing the legitimacy of and policy for the network. One affiliated model, The Learning Network with the Minneapolis Public Schools, did however establish an advisory board. It was comprised of teachers and parents. But according to Tim Glines, the administrator of the program, the advisors became inactive after the program was cut from the school budget.

As the data on Table J indicate, five out of six of the active

independent programs have advisory boards in addition to their boards of directors. (So far, only one incipient program has an advisory board.) The Learning Community in Southfield and The Learning Exchange in Evanston have found advisory boards to be especially useful in obtaining the skills and expertise of a variety of technicians (photographers, graphic designers, systems analysts, publicists, etc.) needed to develop a successful program. Advisors are not legally responsible for the organization, nor do they have any policy-making power; but advisors can be helpful in upgrading the legitimacy and reputation of an organization. As with other types of not-for-profit organizations, some learning networks print the names and affiliations of board members on their stationery and other materials that are seen by the public. Such a practice is quite useful since it communicates to the public that there are real people behind the organization. In essense, the more well-known the list of board members, the less the organization will tend to be viewed with skepticism or suspicion.

As is readily apparent from the data on Table J, there are only eleven full-time and twenty-nine part-time people employed by the eighteen learning networks in the United States. At least five of the full-time people are CETA workers, whose funding will presumably run out after either a six- or twelve-month period (depending upon their type of CETA contract). When The Learning Exchange of Evanston's staff is factored out of the total, six full-time and fourteen part-time employees remain to operate the other seventeen active models.

Most of the network staff earn an annual salary of less than $10,000. Such rates of pay tend to: 1) limit the networks' ability

to attract new people with needed skills and expertise; 2) contribute to high staff turnover rates; 3) lower the performance expectations of staff; and 4) lessen the willingness to terminate incompetent staff.

In view of the low number of learning network staff members and the precarious nature of funding sources available to attract and pay staff members, a relatively high failure rate of the model is not at all surprising.

Most learning networks tend to rely heavily on volunteer help. Bob Juliano at the Community LE refuses to use volunteers. It is his feeling, that volunteers tend to be unreliable and he would prefer to pay people so they are directly accountable to the organization. In line with this approach he has three work-study students helping him provide the service. The Learning Exchange in Evanston decided to stop actively recruiting volunteers after it was determined that too much valuable staff time was being wasted in searching for and training volunteers only to see them leave after a month or two (too often volunteers are notorious for their high turnover). As is obvious from the data, organizations that do not have an adequate level of funding have no choice but to rely on volunteers.

In terms of decision-making, the data on Table J reveal a few distinct trends. Independent operational models have boards that set policy for their organizations and the staff make whatever decisions are involved in carrying out the policy. Those organizations that have no paid staff (viz., Fort Wayne LE and The Learning Community in Detroit) have their operations decisions made by those board members who volunteer to keep the organization functioning. Both of these

programs however indicate that if they had staff members, they would have a policy/operations separation.

The importance of a policy/operations separation stems from the notion that members of a board of directors are representatives of the society in which the organization functions and they receive no compensation from the organization. Legally they can have no immediate self-interest in the program. If the people who set policy were the same people who carry out the operations, it is feasible that the following situation could result: a policy could be made that all funds collected by an organization in 1977 would be earmarked for providing year-long vacations in Bermuda for all the policy-makers. Because of the separation of people who make policy decisions from people who make operations decisions, such a situation is not likely to occur. In essence the policy/operations separation provides a needed system of checks and balances for an organization.

Since most of the affiliated programs have no boards of directors, policy and operations decisions are made by the staff or their immediate supervisors. However, as indicated previously the major decision--whether or not the program is allocated funds--is usually made on a higher institutional level.

An examination of the data indicate that documentation probably plays a significant role in the organizational development and the survival of learning networks. Four types of documentation were considered in this study: 1) the writing of job descriptions for staff members; 2) the development of an organizational chart; 3) the writing of action plans (goals, objectives, strategies, and evaluation

procedures); and 4) the writing of training manuals and instruction sheets for the network systems.

Of the nine operational programs, seven have job descriptions for their staff; four out of nine incipient programs did likewise; and only two of the ten inactive programs had written job decriptions.

Even though most of the organizations are small in size, some of them have an organizational chart depicting lines of responsibility and the overall structure of the organization. Four out of nine operational models have an organizational chart; three out of nine incipient do likewise; and three out of ten inactive programs had a chart.

In respect to planning, five of the operational programs make an effort to document their goals, strategies, etc.; four incipients do likewise; and four of the inactive programs had made some written planning efforts.

Documenting the systems involved with the data-base and developing training manuals and/or instruction sheets have been accomplished by six of the operational programs; three of the incipient models; and two of the inactive programs.

In essence, the data indicate that the operational models have demonstrated more of a willingness to document various aspects of their programs than did the inactive models. It is likely that because of such documentation, the organizations have a greater chance of surviving in the event of one or more key personnel leaving the organization. As stated in Chapter III, when an organization fails to document, the departure of a key person means that the remaining staff have to

pick up the slack and, in some respects, start all over again.

The failure to document also jeopardizes the organizational development of a program because there is nothing concrete with which to compare its procedures and performance. Moreover, the reluctance or inability to document probably has a bearing on the quality of service provided by the organization. And, finally, it definitely makes a comparative analysis (like this study) between models immensely difficult to accomplish.

Personal Impressions

In addition to presenting and analyzing the data collected for this study, it may be appropriate, at this point, for the writer to share some of the personal impressions he formed while examining the learning network movement in the United States. These impressions were formulated as a result of considering three basic questions particularly relevant to the future of learning networks: why are so few people making use of learning networks? how can the effectiveness of a learning network be assessed, i.e., what should be the criteria for success? besides the variables examined in this study, what are some of the other factors that may account for the success or failure of learning networks?

Why are so few people making use of learning networks? As was mentioned in Chapter I, the answer to this question is probably quite complex. Obviously, the low level of usage cannot be attributed solely to the inadequacies of learning networks' publicity efforts. There are many other factors involved. It has been this writer's experience that,

upon explaining what a learning network is and how it can benefit an individual, most people tend to become intensely interested in the concept. They typically say such things as, "What a great idea!" and "Why hasn't something like this been done before?" But still, very few of these people follow-up their initial excitement by actually using the service. When, at a later date, they are asked why they do not use the service, the usual response is, "I just don't have the time." While "the lack of time" is certainly a legitimate reason for not participating in a network, such a response is also likely to be a convenient way to avoid commenting on other factors that may play a more predominant role. For example, learning networks in the 1970's are probably perceived as a somewhat strange type of institution. They provide a form of education to which people in our society are not yet accustomed, i.e., learning from a neighbor rather than from a professional educator. Indeed, learning networks place more demands on their participants than do schools. To get the most out of a learning network, learners have to be sophisticated enough to: 1) define exactly what they want to learn; 2) collect information about people who are willing to teach through the network; 3) develop some type of criteria to determine which network teachers would be most qualified to meet their needs; 4) prioritize all possible teacher leads on the basis of the above criteria; 5) contact high priority teachers to collect additional information to make sure they have the qualities suitable for an appropriate match; 6) isolate the one teacher who represents the "best bet"; 7) negotiate a mutually agreeable arrangement with that teacher in regard to meeting time, place, frequency, and duration, as well as fee structure, method

of payment, materials to be used, and when the sessions should be terminated; 8) carry out the terms of the teacher/learner agreement; 9) assess, on a continuing basis, the teacher's ability to perform in accordance with original expectations; and 10) if the teacher is not meeting learning needs adequately, go through the same process with another teacher in the network. In essence, people who acquire skills and knowledge through a learning network have to be willing to take risks, make independent decisions, and assume responsibilities over and above those expected of students in the typical school situation. People who have customarily had educators and school administrators telling them what, where, when, and from whom they should learn are not likely to have developed the skills necessary to benefit fully from a learning network. In a society that has become increasingly institutionalized and increasingly dependent on the advice, guidance, and services of professionals, a learning network is probably perceived as "strange" to the typical learner. And since many people tend to gravitate to the familar and avoid the strange, learning networks, at least as they are currently structured and presented to the public, have not yet become a fashionable way to learn for most people.

Another reason why so few people use learning networks is because of the confusion created by the generic name originally used to describe the concept. It is this writer's impression that the term "learning exchange" may have discouraged more people from participating in networks than any other single factor. On the basis of hundreds of informal discussions with community residents during the past few years, this writer has found that <u>most</u> people immediately misperceive what The

Learning Exchange is as soon as they hear the name of the organization. Since most people in contemporary society tend to equate "learning" with "schooling," they conclude that the program is a school. And since many people associate "schooling" with a series of negative personal experiences such as boredom, pressure, failure, compulsion, depersonalization, etc., any publicity message released by The Learning Exchange is partially contaminated from the outset. Moreover, the misconception that The Learning Exchange is a school, taken in conjunction with the specific geographic location of its office (Evanston), prevents many Chicago area residents from benefiting from the program because they live "too far from the 'school'" or they think the program is restricted to Evanston residents only.

The word "exchange" creates another set of misconceptions. Most people, upon hearing that particular word in the organization's name, immediately conclude that in order to learn a skill or body of knowledge through the program, they must "exchange" their own skills or knowledge, i.e., they are required to teach. Since most of the "other 97%" do not perceive of themselves as teachers in the traditional sense, they write off the program and do not take the time to find out how it can benefit them.

The name an organization chooses can feasibly spell the difference between the success or failure of the program. It can either facilitate the public's understanding of the concept or it can place a formidable set of communication barriers in the way. Unfortunately, the network concept in the United States has been characterized by the latter circumstance. The Learning Exchange has contemplated changing

its name, but is currently unable to do so because of the expense that would be incurred in modifying promotional materials and "undoing" seven years of publicity and name-identification among participants, funders, and media personnel.

How can the effectiveness of a learning network be assessed? There are, of course, a variety of ways to define success. It could be defined in terms of the total number of people registered in the network. It could be defined in terms of the number of subjects listed by participants. It could be defined in terms of the percentage of callers who can successfully obtain contact information in their areas of interest. It could be defined in terms of the percentage of people who follow up on the contact information and successfully create learning situations in accordance with their needs. It could be defined in terms of the number of foundation grants and corporate contributions the network receives. Or it could be defined in terms of the organization's ability to raise 100% of its operating capital from participants. Of all the possible ways that success could be defined, the last one makes the most sense to this writer. It places the decision about the success or failure of a network squarely in the hands of the consumer. If network participants do not benefit from the service to the extent that they are willing to provide a reasonable level of financial support, then the program is a failure. If, on the other hand, the participants support the program enough to keep it in operation and pay network staff members a modest wage, it should be defined as a success. To apply any other type of criterion will ultimately prove to be a spurious measure. Learning networks are in existence to serve people. If

people want them, they should assume the responsibility to support them. Let the consumers judge the success of the program by what they do with their checkbook. If such a standard were applied to learning networks in the United States, there would obviously be no "successful" programs at the time of this writing.

Besides the variables examined in this study, what are some of the other factors that may account for the success or failure of learning networks? There are three factors that this writer feels should be considered at this time: 1) employment background of the founders, 2) population size needed to reach a "critical mass," and 3) type of people who reside in a network's service area.

First, it appears that most of the people who start learning networks have been either educators by profession or have been studying to become educators. Unfortunately, the college curriculum which has been designed to prepare teachers to take their place within the established educational order has little or no relevance to the task of developing and maintaining a learning network. Instead of learning how to handle behavioral problems, write lesson plans, employ appropriate classroom methods and techniques, etc., people who establish learning networks should have a basic understanding of organizational development, market research, advertising, computerization, accounting, public relations, fund raising, and management. Few, if any, founders of learning networks have had the kinds of work or academic experiences that would adequately prepare them for the task they are undertaking. As long as the development and implementation of learning networks is up to members of the educational profession, there is little likelihood

that the concept will ever become firmly established in the United States.

Second, the number of people who reside in the service area of a learning network has a bearing on whether or not the program has the potential of becoming successful. With all other factors being equal, the smaller the number of potential users of a network, the lower the number of active network participants. Since a direct relationship quite logically exists between the overall success of a typical network and the number of people participating in the program, there are probably some cities too small to make a learning network work--at least as the concept is presently packaged. Just how many network participants are needed to reach the "critical mass" necessary for a successful program is still an open question. This writer would speculate that it is probably somewhere around 5,000. In other words, if 5% of the population of a city of 100,000 could be encouraged to participate in a learning network, the program would probably have a good chance of succeeding. Obviously, to attain a 5% participation level, much more work has to be done not only in terms of publicizing the network concept, but also in terms of restructuring it in ways that can more appropriately meet the needs of potential users.

Finally, closely related to the size of the population is the question about the nature of the population. What kinds of people reside in the service area? Is it predominantly a collegiate, industrial, recreational (vacation), retirement, or agricultural town? The Learning Exchange of Evanston has found that people who are between the ages of 20-35 and who have attended college are the people most

likely to use the service, at least as it is presently structured. If the structure were altered somewhat and the program was presented to different population groups in ways that were adequately market-tested, would Blacks, Latinos, seniors, blue collar families, and other groups make more use of the service? This writer would answer in the affirmative, as there are indications that some people in the above population groups are already benefiting from the service (even though their numbers are relatively small). A multifaceted marketing approach would probably raise participation levels within many special population groups. At the present time, no one within the learning network movement (including this writer) has a clear notion of what a multifacted marketing approach would look like. Some of the research questions that are included in the final portion of the next chapter should, however, help to provide a systematic guide for developing such an approach.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the ineffectual implementation of the learning network concept in the United States, the state-of-the-art leaves much to be desired. Of fifty-two original programs, all established independent of one another, only eighteen are now in operation--and 50% of those have been founded within the past year. The problems confronting the various models are many and in some cases quite complex. As this study indicates, most of the learning networks are faced with basically the same kinds of problems and many of them relate directly to the seven operational variables discussed in the preceding pages--especially funding, management, and communication.

The central problem as demonstrated in this study, is money. Learning networks tend to have very little of it. The average program starts with less than $500; and, more often than not, this initial amount is provided by the founders of the program. Once in operation, learning networks generally have an annual operating budget of under $5,000 (that is, when the operating budget of The Learning Exchange in Evanston is not taken into consideration when computing the average).

The lack of money not only sets into motion an entire series of operational difficulties but it also reflects a more pervasive shortcoming on the part of people who establish and maintain the typical learning network. While they tend to have an abundance of idealism,

a set of high principles, a sincere concern for their fellow human beings, they also tend not to be very sophisticated regarding economic matters. For the most part, they have demonstrated, at least on the basis of this study, either a reluctance or an inability to raise money not only from the people who use their services but also from sources in the community (corporations and foundations) that traditionally help organizations provide needed services to community residents. There are, however, a handful of programs that have demonstrated that it can be done. In particular, the DeKalb Exchange and The Learning Exchange of Evanston have obtained large or moderate-sized grants to help develop their respective programs. Moreover, networks like the Community LE in North Providence, Rhode Island and again The Learning Exchange in Evanston have attained some degree of support from users of their services (approximately 32% and 66% of their respective annual operating budgets).

Almost all of the independent learning networks either have taken or are in the process of taking the legal steps that are extremely helpful in raising funds (viz., incorporating as a not-for-profit organization and attaining an IRS tax-exempt status). Taking the next few steps is where many of the money problems begin to surface. Few of the networks have assembled boards of directors that include influential representatives from the business community. By not having the involvement of these types of people, the likelihood of an organization obtaining the initial support necessary for developing an adequate program is decreased. Moreover, when an organization has the involvement of few if any people with business experience, the

tasks involved in developing an internal support program (i.e., obtaining money through client fees or contributions) become doubly difficult.

From the standpoint of funding, this study indicates that learning networks which are affiliated with sponsoring institutions tend to be in worse shape than the independent programs. Except for the Front Free School in Michigan, the Human Resource Exchange in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and The Learning Network in Minneapolis, (having received $1,000, $8,000, and $4,500 respectively from their sponsoring institutions), none of the other affiliated models were able to obtain substantial operating support. More importantly, however, the data indicate that once support is granted, it can easily be withdrawn, e.g., of the three affiliated models cited above, only the Front Free School is still in operation. The other two were ultimately victims of institutional budget cuts. Thus it appears that affiliated models are particularly vulnerable when their sponsoring institutions are forced to reduce expenditures. This is substantiated, in part, by the fact that the affiliated models in general have a somewhat higher failure rate than the independent models.

As mentioned earlier, insufficient resources create a series of other operational problems. For example, if an organization does not have the necessary funds to attract competent and experienced people who are willing to make a long-term commitment to the organization, it is unlikely that the various systems needed to operate the program effectively will ever be developed. And the less they are developed the less likely it is that a network will be able to raise funds from people who use the service. In essence, its a vicious cycle: learning

networks in general have not developed the ability to raise money, as a result they have not implemented programs needed for providing a quality service, as a result the individual users or potential users of the service do not support the program, and as a result the networks either become inactive or operate far below a desirable level.

This vicious cycle also comes into play when the communication programs of learning networks are considered. Because of inadequate funding, no learning network in the United States has conducted a market research program to identify the most appropriate market for the concept and to determine how the concept should be communicated to that market. As a result, no organization has developed a comprehensive and coordinated communication program centering on an effectively tested message or messages. Consequently, a disproportionately small number of people are adequately informed about the service, let alone motivated to use it. This problem is exemplified by The Learning Exchange in Evanston. After nearly seven years of operation, after having been interviewed on over a hundred radio and television talk shows, after having more than sixty newspaper articles written about the service, after distributing tens of thousands of posters and take-one brochures, etc., less than a one half of one percent of the people residing in the Chicago area are involved in the program. Moreover, informal surveys conducted by this writer indicate that over 75% of the people in Chicago never heard of The Learning Exchange and of those who did, the vast majority had serious misconceptions about what it is and how they can benefit from it (most people think it is a school that one attends and that in order to learn through the program one is

obligated to teach something). This situation represents a very serious communication problem and it is characteristic of all the learning networks in the United States.

Another byproduct of the lack of market research is the paucity of information available about the most appropriate ways to generate internal income. The Learning Exchange's moderately successful experience with a voluntary membership program represents only one of many possible ways that income can be generated from the clients of a service. Because of an insufficient funding base, very little market research has been done to determine how much people are willing to pay, the merits of voluntary contributions vs. mandatory fees for service, telephone solicitations vs. direct-mail approaches, etc. As a result of this lack of data, it is not surprising that only 12% of the funds used to operate learning networks nationally are derived from people who are actual users of the service.

The money problem also has a definite bearing on the management and administration of learning networks. Insufficient funds limit an organization's ability to attract and retain people with the kinds of skills necessary for developing and operating an effective program. Thus, most learning networks rely heavily on volunteer help or on staff members who must find other sources of income in order to meet their personal expenses. Such a staffing situation is not conducive to the creation of a dynamic, efficient, and effective service. Moreover, staff members operating under such circumstances find little time to devote to the tedious, yet critically important, task of documentation, i.e., recording on paper the organization's goals,

action plans, evaluation procedures, as well as job descriptions for staff members and training manuals for new people. Without such documentation, the network and its operational systems tend to have little substance; and when the founders or key people leave the organization, the remaining staff have a difficult time in continuing the program. The data in this study substantiate the importance of documentation, as the inactive models have devoted less time toward this aspect of organizational development than did the active models, thus contributing to the demise of some programs.

The pervasive money problems of learning networks effect the quality of their services in additional ways. Only four of the eighteen active networks have an organized system for updating client information in the data-base and only two networks have the funds necessary to actively seek feedback from clients after they have received contact information from the network. As a result, a substantial portion of the data-base is inevitably out-of-date. Moreover, with the exception of The Learning Exchange of Evanston, all the learning networks expressed satisfaction with the index card type of information system. While the index card system seems to be adequate for networks with a relatively small number of participants, as the size of the clientele grows, as more efforts are put forth to upgrade the data-base operation, and as the systems and procedures for generating an increased level of internal income are developed (through periodic solicitation mailings, market statistics, renewal programs, etc.), it becomes obvious that some type of computer technology will be more suited to the task at hand. But, most organizations have no funds to explore the potential

of such computer systems.

Fortunately, the data collected in this study suggest that the problems concerning money (and many of the other problems that stem from the lack of it) may diminish to some degree during the coming years. Most of the operational learning networks are beginning to recognize the relationship between: 1) a quality service and the likelihood of clients providing financial support for its continuation; 2) a quality service and the need to apply certain business disciplines for its maintenance and development; and 3) the acquisition of external funds and the need to develop appropriate policies and board configurations to obtain such funds.

As a result of an HEW grant awarded to The Learning Exchange of Evanston for the development of a series of technical assistance programs, learning network administrators now have the opportunity to share their common experiences and problems and develop strategies that address some of the major issues facing their respective networks. Through such programs it is expected that a more business-like approach in providing human services on the part of learning networks will ultimately prevail.

Moreover, the fact that the data in this study depict the philosophical drift of the learning network movement (especially in terms of the incipient models) away from "revolutionary/activist" and more to "community service" seems to indicate that the new generation of learning networks may be less hampered by: an insistence on providing services free of charge; suspicion and distrust of people within the "establishment"; and an unwillingness to apply proven business disciplines

in serving their constituencies. The degree to which this happens will in large part have a significant bearing on the future development of the learning network concept in the United States.

Recommendations for Further Research

As is fairly obvious from the data collected in this study, much more is unknown about the learning network concept than is known. In order to develop a larger body of knowledge about the concept and to determine the effectiveness of this relatively new approach to education, further studies need to be conducted. These studies should focus on two major areas: 1) users of a network, and 2) the effects of program modifications.

User Research

In order for network administrators to develop effective programs that meet people's needs, it is important that they know something about their clients. For example, answers to the following questions will help administrators make appropriate and rational decisions as they develop their programs: What are the demographic characteristics of network participants (regarding age, race, educational background, socioeconomic level, profession, and marital status)? What aspects of the network concept do participants in different demographic groups find appealing? Unappealing? How do people in different demographic groups make use of the service? In what ways are the usage patterns similar or dissimilar for different groups? Are there any

personality traits common to those people who develop successful arrangements through the network? How does participation in a learning network affect the lives of people over the short-term? Long-term? Why do network teachers offer to share their skills and knowledge with others? For profit? For companionship? To feel useful? Based on information obtained in examining these types of questions, network administrators should be better able not only to make appropriate alterations in their programs (e.g., rectifying, if possible, those items that clients find unappealing) but also to determine what is the most effective way to communicate the network concept to prospective users in different demographic groups and to attract additional resource people (e.g., a promotional brochure that is distributed in a blue collar neighborhood should emphasize those subjects and features of the program that are especially attractive to that particular target audience, whereas the promotional brochure for a Black neighborhood might have to be markedly different in order to be effective). Without specific answers to many of the above questions, the design of the network as well as publicity approach used to attract more people into the network will continue to rely on the guesswork of network staff members, many of whom may be somewhat out of touch with the people they purport to serve.

Effects of Program Modification

As a result of an examination of the data collected in the user studies, changes in the design and execution of the learning network concept will inevitably be made. Each of these changes should be documented and systematically tested in order to gauge the effectiveness of the change. Of particular importance in this regard are

questions such as: What is the best way to ensure a continuing source of revenue for operating a network? Voluntary memberships? Registration fees? Commissions on teacher's fees? Public support? Or a combination thereof? How can computer technology be used to improve the quality of a network's service? What are its costs? What are its disadvantages? Should learning networks play a more active advisement and advocacy role, i.e., should network staff assist participants in choosing what they want to learn and help them negotiate suitable arrangements with other network participants? Should learning networks expand their services to include a free university component, i.e., schedule classes, provide meeting space, collect registration fees, pay teachers, etc? In large metropolitan areas, would it be feasible to have a series of satellite walk-in offices? How would the quality and cost of the service be effected? Would it be feasible to operate a learning network on a state-wide basis from a central office using an "800" toll-free phone number? How would the quality and cost of the service be affected? What kinds of additional publicity approaches might be developed in order to reach more people and motivate them to participate in a network? What can a learning network do to help promote word-of-mouth advertising? How can network staff "teach" participants to effectively use this new approach to education? What can be learned from participants who are benefiting the most from the service? What criteria do they use in choosing a teacher? How do they negotiate fee and meeting arrangements? How can their effective methods and techniques be communicated to other network participants? Should a learning network attempt to evaluate the performance of its teachers? If so, how might such an evaluation be accomplished without jeopardizing the fundamental nature of the network concept?

To answer the above questions will require an elaborate and comprehensive action research design. In some cases it would entail the modification of existing programs, in others it would entail the development and testing of new models in geographic areas that have not yet been exposed to "first generation" learning networks. Whatever research is done in this regard should be communicated to all the administrators of learning networks in the United States and other countries as well.

If, after an adequate test period, it is determined that the network concept does indeed represent a viable way to mobilize the "other 97%," provide low-cost avenues for people to learn what they want when they want, and promote positive interaction and cooperation between people, then the concept should be replicated in towns and cities across the nation. If, on the other hand, it turns out that the model is not viable in its current form (or in the form of its many possible hybrids), then it will be time for the educational theorists and activists to go back to the drawing boards to explore for new ways to organize and distribute learning opportunities for people. Either way, there is only one way to find out--take whatever financial, personal, and professional risks are involved in giving learning networks an authentic test. The potential payoff seems to warrant whatever risks are involved.

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